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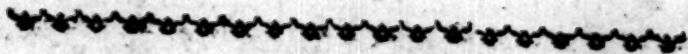


'T WAS W R O N G

T O

M A R R Y H I M.

V O L. II.



T. W. A. W. R. O. N. C.

TO

M. A. R. Y. H. I. M.

M. O. L. I. M.

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'T WAS WRONG

TO

MARRY HIM;

OR, THE

HISTORY

OF

LADY DURSLEY.

VOL. II.

L O N D O N :

Printed for F. and J. NOBLE, at their respective
Circulating Libraries, near *Middle Row, Holborn;*
and *Saint Martin's Court, near Leicester Square.*

MDCCCLXXIII.

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T WAS WRONG

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OR, THE

HISTORY

OF

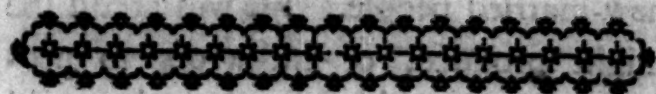
LADY DURSLEY.

VOL. II.

LONDON:

Printed for W. and J. Nourse, at their respective
Circulating Libraries, near Abchurch Lane, Holborn;
and John Murray's Court, near Lincoln's Square.

MDCCLXXIII.



'T W A S W R O N G

T O

M A R R Y H I M.

 A W L E Y, against whom Lætitia had first formed a design, was seldom seen by her, and when she *did* see him, he behaved with an indifference and neglect which not only deprived her of all hopes, but rendered him odious to her.—She took little or no pains, indeed, to conceal her real disposition from him, and the free discovery of it made him think her a very

VOL. II.

B

improper

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improper person to be in the house with new-married people. He was afraid she might produce, or endeavour to produce, much mischief ; and yet he could not strike upon any method to make Charlotte less desirous of keeping so artful a girl near her.

Charlotte, perfectly good and unsuspecting herself, entertained no suspicion of other people. She always saw Fawley with pleasure. Looking upon him as the sincerest friend she had in the world, and greatly instrumental to Sir James's returning to her so much improved in his manners, she thought she could not treat him with sufficient kindness : the kindness of her treatment only made him the more regret that he could not become entire master of a heart which, had not Sir James been his compe-

competitor, he would, undoubtedly, have possessed.

Fawley had long thought, that as there were no hopes for him, it would be better for him to see Miss Selby less frequently : and now finding that his intimacy enabled him to discover additional beauties in her, personal and intellectual, he resolved to take his leave of her before she was married, to return to London, and not to see her again till he could see her without any painful emotions.

Agreeably to those resolutions, he waited on her two or three days before her marriage, and told her, that as he was obliged to return to London, he came to bid her adieu.

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Charlotte, who loved Fawley, next to Sir James, more than any man in the world, and indeed more than she thought she did, started at the word *adieu*: declaring that she was sorry there was a necessity for their separation.

"I leave you, Miss Selby," said he, "very happy, I hope, in the expectation of seeing all your wishes gratified in a short time; and as mine are all interested in *your* felicity, I have only to pray for its permanency."

"My obligations to Mr. Fawley," replied she, with a voice which shewed she was strongly affected by his behaviour, "are too great to suffer me to be unconcerned at his absence.—I shall be extremely glad to see him whenever it is agreeable or convenient to him,

“him, and I am very sure that Sir
“James must be of my opinion.—If
“you leave us for the present, there-
“fore, I hope you will return to us
“again soon: nobody, you may be cer-
“tain, will receive you with more plea-
“sure than I shall.”

He bowed; stifled a sigh just as it was rising, and retired, without mentioning Miss Monkley who happened not to be in the room—Then, calling at Sir James’s lodgings, he wished him joy on his approaching marriage. “Particular business,” added he, “will prevent me from making my congratulations immediately afterwards, but I assure you I think that you will find, in Miss Selby, a mistress, friend, and wife united: with her, therefore, you will want no society.”

Dursley thanked him. He said nothing then about their meeting in London, but he did not by any means subscribe to his opinion with regard to the *want of no society*. Few men loved company better, few men delighted more in a variety of diversions. Just at that time, indeed, he thought chiefly of Charlotte, as he had been so long wishing to possess her, and as he really preferred her to every other woman, yet he also knew that he should be, most probably, tired of her in a very little while: he, therefore, only smiled at Fawley's supposing it was possible for *one* woman to be every thing long. He was, it was true, perpetually swearing that Charlotte had every charm to win, and to keep his heart, but, like most other men, he did not always mean what he said.

On

On Sir James's marrying Miss Selby soon afterwards, Fawley left the country — Sir James was very well pleased with his wife, as he had from the first sight of her, admired her person, but he would have been glad to have taken possession of it without paying, what he called, an extravagant price for it by the surrender of his liberty. However, to exclude Fawley, or any other man from the possession of that person, he would have suffered a much severer punishment than a matrimonial one. Matrimony, indeed, was not, at first, any way disagreeable to him, as Charlotte, who had till then been restrained by modesty from discovering all the tenderness of her heart for him, now gave a loose to it, when they were by themselves: her transports were great, but they were the

transports of a woman of virtue, under the correction of delicacy.

Sir James soon after his marriage wrote to Burleigh: Lady Dursley wrote, at the same time, to Mrs. Burleigh. The Baronet's letter was loose, rambling, rapturous, and characteristic: the style of it would have been agreeable enough to Burleigh, in his roving days, but he was become, by his union with Mrs. Murphy, a new man, and totally domesticated: in a very different style, therefore, did he answer it. He informed him that he was very happy in having found in Mrs. Burleigh the sincerest of friends, and that he hoped she would in a little while make him a father, a character which he had been studying for some time, that he might sustain it
with

with a propriety suitable to its importance.—These were the concluding lines —“ I look upon the education given to
“ the rising generation to be of the utmost
“ consequence to society. As a
“ great part of our happiness depends
“ upon the connections we are obliged
“ to have with the world, all parents
“ should be particularly careful to instill
“ into the minds of their children,
“ of both sexes, the purest principles,
“ at an early age, when they may be
“ supposed to make the deepest impression
“ upon them.”

Sir James, who had never considered this matter in so serious a light as his once gay friend now viewed it, broke out into a violent fit of laughter, and vented not a few *bon mots* upon the extreme care which he proposed to take

in forming the mind of his future heir. Lady Dursley sincerely congratulated the expecting mother on her interesting situation, which seemed to give both her husband and herself not a little satisfaction. She also communicated to Mrs. Fielding all that Burleigh had written upon the subject, who felt her face glow at finding that he seemed to have forgotten *her*, while he was doatingly attached to his wife. She was sorry to feel that she still retained regard enough for him to be concerned about what was certainly a proof of the propriety of his conduct; and endeavoured to check the intrusion of all ideas injurious to Mr. Fielding who was exceedingly kind to her. She endeavoured to reason herself into a juster way of thinking, and accustom herself to reflect, with pleasure, on the improved principles of Burleigh, and de-
fired

fired Lady Dursley to join *her* good wishes for Mrs. Burleigh's health and safety, with her own.

Charlotte very readily promised to comply with Mrs. Fielding's request: her heart, indeed, overflowed with good nature. Happy in the man whom she had long loved, she sincerely wished to see every body as happy as herself. This benevolent sensation prompted her to behave in the kindest, and most obliging manner to Miss Monkley, who still continued with her, tho' disconcerted to such a degree, and so out of humour, that she could not tell whether she should go or stay.—“ Sir James indeed is married, and Fawley is gone, but there are more men in the world, and I am more in the way of seeing them here than at home.” These consider-

ations determined her to stay with Lady Dursley, tho' she could hardly bring herself to be commonly civil to Sir James, when she found that he really loved his Charlotte with great tenderness.

Sir James, seeing that it was not possible for any woman to be more addicted to envy and jealousy than Lætitia, looked upon these passions to be the properest imaginable to assist him in executing the design he had formed against her; and in order to facilitate the execution of it, he behaved to her with much apparent politeness, as the friend of his wife, yet with the most cutting indifference, as a woman, to be conceived—This mortifying behaviour so provoked her, and roused her resentment to such a pitch, that she determined to affect to be extremely fond of him,

him, at the very time she believed she really hated him.

The bait took: Sir James, tho' he appeared not, at first, to see her *manœuvres*, clearly perceived them, and resolved, at a proper juncture, to take advantage of them:—but he was not yet tired of his wife.

While Miss Monkley was thus laying a plan for her own undoing, Mrs. Burleigh fell a martyr to her passion for a man many years younger than herself, and died in giving birth to a son.

Burleigh, who truly esteemed her, sincerely lamented her loss: she had in every respect exactly conformed to his inclinations, and only regretted, in her last moments, her separation from *him*.

As

24 'T WAS WRONG TO MARRY HIM.

As soon as he could compose himself, he wrote to Sir James to acquaint him with his loss, and with the great concern he felt upon the occasion.

This intelligence quite diverted the Baronet, who now began to think that a dead wife was full as good as, if not better than, a living one. Lady Dursley, when her grief, for the death of her old friend, was a little abated, rejoiced with Mrs. Fielding at Burleigh's having got a very pleasing addition to his fortune—By his œconomy, after his marriage, he had been enabled to redeem the greatest part of his estate; he found himself, therefore, at his wife's death, in more affluent circumstances than the abovementioned Ladies had ever known him.

As

As Lady Dursley had not been in London from the time of her first departure from it, she had not seen Burleigh till she went to Sir James's house in Grosvenor-street. There she received the congratulations of all her friends, Burleigh's among the rest, who enquired after Mrs. Fielding, and expressed great satisfaction at hearing that she was well. Lady Dursley, in return, expressed the satisfaction which *she* felt at being told that Fawley was in town, and that Burleigh frequently saw him.

Burleigh was, in Fawley's opinion, so much altered for the better by his marriage with Mrs. Murphy, that he took a great deal of pleasure in his company; especially as he could, with the utmost unreserve, talk of Lady Dursley, as of a Lady with whom they were both acquainted,

quainted, without being suspected, he thought, of having any particular inclination for her. Burleigh, however, was too knowing a one in love-affairs, not to perceive that Fawley was entirely under the dominion of the *belle passion*, in spite of all his efforts to conceal his feelings: but as he *strove* to conceal them, he took no notice of his discoveries. He very good naturedly allowed him to talk about the mistress of his heart, for so Lady Dursley, according to his observations, certainly was. Fawley had no idea of his being found out; and he would have been shocked at the thoughts of his being suspected of having any designs upon a married woman. He really had no *bad* designs on Lady Dursley, he wished only to promote her happiness; and, for the promotion of her felicity, would have risked character,

ter, fortune—life itself. However, as he imagined that, by her union with Sir James, her wishes were compleated, and that she wanted nothing to make her happier than she was, he avoided seeing her; he only saw her when chance threw her in his way. But though *he* seldom made his appearance at Sir James's, Burleigh called there very often. He had lived, indeed, with so much satisfaction in a domestic style, that he was become a family-man, and liked to chat with Lady Dursley, and her friends, whenever Sir James was from home. Not that he had any partiality to Charlotte: he always thought *her* agreeable, but he always thought *Olivia* infinitely more so, yet, as she treated him at all times with great good nature and good manners, and as he frequently met company at her house, he rather chose to spend

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spend his evenings with her and her friends, than with his old companions, as his marriage had made a considerable alteration in his principles.

By being often with Sir James and Lady Dursley, Berleigh had continual opportunities to converse with Latticia, to converse with her often in private. Those opportunities she employed in flirting with him, though she had no serious designs, because she thought his fortune too small for the gratification of her wishes. However, as he was a handsome fellow, much admired by the women, and rather attentive to please them, it flattered her vanity to have him about her in public, when he was in a humour to distinguish her: but as he had no view in his conversations with her, he more frequently paid his court to
Lady

Lady Dursley, who, ever easy, ever good humoured, received his civilities, and returned them in a manner which rendered him still more desirous of obliging her. Lætitia was so provoked by such a behaviour, that she left him to my Lady, and attached herself to Sir James, merely because she could not bear his neglect: and he, who desired nothing better than to be courted, gave himself up to the indulgence of his passion for admiration, imagining, that if Lætitia behaved so as to make the world believe he was a fortunate man, he should be one in reality. Whenever they were at the play, or the opera, Lætitia, upon Burleigh's offering his assistance to Lady Dursley, to conduct her to her coach, caught hold of Sir James's arm: sometimes he attempted to throw her off—"Indeed, " Letty, you must take care of your-
" self;

“ self; for I see somebody on the other
 “ side of the house, whom I must speak
 “ to.”— She would then reply, cling-
 ing close to him—“ You shall put
 “ me into the coach first;” and look
 full in his face, with such an affect-
 ation of innocent tenderness, that many
 men, more penetrating than Sir James,
 might have been deceived. He was,
 indeed, himself sometimes so far im-
 posed upon, as to pity the lovesick girl.
 In his pitying moments he resolved to
 look kindly on her: in those moments
 he frequently grasped the hand which he
 put in his with eagerness, tapped her
 cheek gently, whispered something amo-
 rous in her ear, and talked a little non-
 sense to her aloud. By all these artful
 proceedings, he made her at length be-
 lieve that she should lure him from La-
 dy Dursley, over whom, equally regard-
 less

less of her obligations to *her*, and of her own character, she very much wished to triumph.

By her eagerness to secure her conquest, Lætitia was often unguarded, and encouraged Dursley to take liberties which he would not, without something very like *invitation*, have allowed himself. Every moment did she seize to draw off his attention from Lady Dursley, or from any body else, and to fix it to *her* alone. She talked, she laughed, she romped with him. Sometimes she snatched his handkerchief, gloves, &c. &c. on purpose to make him run after her; and whenever he pursued her, he commonly made himself amends for his trouble, by kissing her, and tumbling her, till she cried out. Sometimes, breaking suddenly from him,
she]

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She ran back to Lady Dursley, and complained that Sir James was rude—that there was no enduring him. Whenever she so broke from him, he followed her briskly; and whenever she so complained, he told his Lady that she was a little lying gipsy, and that he would punish her. A new romping-bout then began, and down they were soon seen upon the floor. There Sir James had an opportunity to discover beauties which were not so visible at any other time. On those occasions the attitudes into which Lætitia was thrown, made her appear doubly inviting to a man of his warm constitution, and naturally stimulated him to seize more favours than he would have thought of in another situation.—Women do not enough consider what advantages over them they give men, by inflaming *their* passions, and raising their own.

own. Lætitia was naturally of an amorous complexion: by encouraging a handsome young fellow of the same disposition to be perpetually toying with her, she began to feel sensations which she had never felt before, and which she was strongly prompted to indulge, when she thought she could indulge them with safety: but the fear of going too far sometimes restrained her, and forced her to endeavour to make him keep at a greater distance.

Sir James, seeing every thing which past in Lætitia's heart with regard to *him*, thought himself sure of his prey: he, therefore, like an experienced sportsman, determined not to hurry matters, but to allow time enough for the full gratification of all his desires.

Lady

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Lady Dursley too saw—she could not help seeing—Lætitia's indiscretion, and Sir James's readiness to encourage it, but as he always, whenever he spoke of Miss Monkley, mentioned her as a weak, good natured kind of a girl, more an object of pity than of admiration, and desired her to be good to her with an excessive carelessness, as if he was quite indifferent about her, she, for some time, imagined that he really meant nothing by trifling with her, but to pass away some idle hours; that he rather wished, indeed, to let her quite alone.

In this manner was Charlotte, from a naturally-unsuspecting temper, and a thorough confidence in her husband, deceived, but Burleigh soon saw how things were going, and spoke of Lætitia to Fawley in the terms she deserved;
adding,

adding, also, that he was very sorry for Lady Dursley.

Fawley, who still secretly adored Charlotte, started at his friend's information. He sighed, and, looking wildly at Burleigh, exclaimed, "Poor dear unfortunate creature! I was always afraid she could not be happy with him: he has not half delicacy enough for such an angel."

After having asked Burleigh several questions, he determined to call and see if she wanted any assistance.

Just at that time, Burleigh received an invitation from a very particular friend to spend the Christmas with him at his house, which was about fifty miles from London.

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Burleigh, having no particular engagement, very readily accepted of this invitation.

On being conducted into his friend's drawing-room, in a few moments after he had quitted his post chaise, the first object which struck his eyes was Mrs. Fielding.

It is not easy to say whether he was at the sight of her more pleased or surprised, not imagining that Mr. Donne—the name of his friend—had any acquaintance with her: nor did Mr. Fielding at all know that Burleigh was the man whom his wife, by her own confession, preferred to all the world; he was, therefore, quite easy and unsuspecting.

Olivia,

Olivia, however, blushed extremely at the first appearance of Burleigh, who felt a pleasure not to be described at having met her so unexpectedly. He was, indeed, too much transported to address her in a regular manner, as if she had been a person altogether indifferent to him, but he accosted her with the respectful freedom of an old acquaintance, and declared the satisfaction his meeting with her had given him.

Olivia, not being herself more collected, replied, with emotions, which discovered her inability to behold him with the composure of a person who never felt any prepossessions in his favour.—Her emotions had such an effect upon him, that he could hardly contain his joy; but when he turned, and

C 2 saw

saw Mr. Fielding, he fetched a heavy sigh—Reflecting that she was united to another, he sighed.

Olivia, seeing him avert his face from her, and hearing his sighs, could scarce suppress the alarm which were ready to burst from her full heart. She felt an inexpressible regret at having accepted of Mr. Fielding whom she had never, indeed, pretended to love—No woman could have behaved to a husband in a more unexceptionable manner, yet when she saw Burkeigh at liberty, and knew that his fortune, tho' by no means large, was sufficient to support them decently with economy: when she saw too that she was still agreeable to him, she could not help reflecting, with concern, on her being the wife of another—However, as she thought that she acted, in
some

some degree, criminally, by indulging reflections which could only serve to make the performance of her conjugal duties less agreeable to her, she determined to drive them from her mind, if possible, and to strive against a passion, the encouragement of which would be quite unpardonable.—But how to banish the idea of Burleigh from her memory—there was the difficulty—He was ever remembered by her—He was now likely to be near her for a considerable time, as Mr. Doane was one of his oldest and most intimate friends, and declared that he would not soon part with him.

While Mrs. Fielding's mind was filled with the most disagreeable, and mortifying reflections, Burleigh's was not in a more eligible state. He wished the old husband any where but where he was,

C 3

however,

96 'T WAS WRONG TO MARRY HIM.

However, as the removal of him was not to be accomplished, he had nothing to do but to endeavour to make himself contented with him, and to enjoy the blessing which fortune had thrown in his way: for a blessing he could not but think his proximity to Olivia. Animated with the prospect of enjoying her company and conversation for a good while, he felt himself happy in his residence at Mr. Dome's, and imagined that he was at full liberty to make the most of his fortunate situation. He saw no impropriety in desiring the society of a married woman in company with her husband whom she treated with the greatest regard. He thought, indeed, that he might safely aspire to her friendship; and he aspired to nothing more. He did not, however, consider that it was no easy matter to distinguish friendship from

power
a softer

a softer passion, and that where an amiable woman is the object, it is hardly possible to prevent the tenderest sensations from mixing with our esteem. Several other reasons rendered it extremely difficult for Burleigh to be so much a *Platonic* as he proposed to be. In the first place, Mrs. Fielding, by living an easy peaceable life in the country, not only enjoyed a very good state of health, but had recovered that rosy bloom which is so soon lost in London by a life of perpetual dissipation. She was, therefore, become a more desirable object in Burleigh's eyes than when he was in love with her before. Secondly, as they were both under the same roof—they had never been so critically situated till then—they had a thousand opportunities of conversing together with freedom, and of entering into familiarities doubly agreeable to

C 4

them

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then both. Lastly, Burleigh had, of
 her, been so accustomed to the soft so-
 ciety of an amiable woman, that he
 could wish no other. — When a woman
 infinitely more amiable than her whom
 he had lost, a woman whom he had,
 from his first acquaintance with her, pre-
 ferred to all others, was thus thrown in
 his way, how could he help being
 charmed with her? charmed, indeed,
 he was, to such a degree, that it was
 notwithstanding the utmost violence offered
 to his inclination, he kept himself from
 discovering it to every body: from her
 it could not be concealed, nor did he
 wish to hide it from her, as he had re-
 solved to cherish it within the bounds
 of friendship, and of that delicacy which
 is ever due to a woman of character:
 this love is a subtle, as well as a powerful
 passion; and Burleigh found himself un-
 able

able to adhere strictly to the rules he had laid down for his conduct upon so nice an occasion. When he was in a conversible humour, he commonly directed his discourses to Mrs. Fielding; when he met with a passage in any book which gave him particular pleasure, or a paragraph in a news-paper which he thought entertaining, he could not rest till he communicated them to her, knowing that her sentiments, upon almost every subject, corresponded exactly with his own. Whenever they walked out together, he was always mechanically, as it were, by her side. His hand was always ready to assist her in getting over any awkward places; whenever she appeared to be weary, he offered her his arm for her support. Civilities of this kind from him were transporting; but she disregarded them if Mr. Fielding

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was present, and then attached herself to him.—She had hours enough, however, with Burleigh, when her husband was absent, either riding or walking with Mr. Donne over his grounds, or assisting him in entertaining his country neighbours. Burleigh, not being fond of the conversation of those neighbours, who, though very worthy people, were quite unfuitable companions, generally left them, when they came to his friend's house, as soon as he could decently, and retired to the drawing-room, in which he seldom failed to find Mrs. Fielding, with Miss Donne, a young Lady about fourteen, an only daughter. Mr. Donne, indeed, upon Mrs. Fielding's arrival, requested her to take his Harriot under her protection during her residence with him. On her mother's death, which happened some years before, he had put her

to

to a boarding-school, and she was at home for the holidays.

Harriot Donne, being a good-humoured, thoughtless girl, who chose to divert herself in her own way, either with her musick, her drawing, or her work, paid little or no attention to Burleigh and Mrs. Fielding.

Mrs. Fielding, though inwardly charmed with the pleasure which Burleigh evidently took in her company, was upon her guard before him, and endeavoured to prevent him from reading what passed in her heart on his account. She was so careful, indeed, not to discover sentiments which militated against the affection and duty she owed Mr. Fielding, that Burleigh, whose tenderness increased every hour, became discontented, and

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even melancholy. The violence of his passion made him, at length, fancy that she was severe; that there was no occasion for a behaviour rigidly nice to *him* who respected her, he believed, too much to take any improper liberties.—Her coolness and indifference grew insupportable.—“She may be my friend, most assuredly, though she can never be my wife nor my mistress: and while I expect, while I ask for, nothing but her friendship, it is hard to be denied *that*.”—These reflections, and others of a similar kind, occurred to him frequently, as he frequently conversed with her: and every successive conversation with her, in consequence of such reflections, rendered him additionally unhappy. His unhappiness was attended with a visible dejection.

Olivia

Olivia immediately saw, and saw with concern, the alteration in him, but she did not dare to allow herself to take any notice of it. Honour and discretion, both, forbade her to take notice of it: and the more she suffered from the concealment of her concern, the more she was afraid of speaking to him, lest she should either speak too kindly to him, or lest he should be ready to interpret what she might say to him too much in his own favour. In short, she did not know what to do: she was anxious, she was restless; she still, however, strove to conceal sensations which she ought not, in her opinion, to indulge, much less to disclose to the person who had given birth to them.

Burleigh, who watched her every look, her every motion, perceiving that she

she was not quite so chearful as she used to be, seized an opportunity, one day, when Miss Donne was absent for a few minutes.

Catching her hand, he, with a softness which rendered his voice absolutely melting, said, "Are you not well to-day? You appear so uncommonly dispirited, that I cannot describe the anxiety I feel for you."

Olivia, little expecting such an address, presently felt her face and neck in a glow. She told him, in reply, that she was perfectly well, and that there was no occasion for his being concerned about *her*.

As she spoke those words, rather in a sharp key, he was exceedingly hurt by them ;

them ; imagining that she was displeased with him.

Just when he was going to make some sort of apology for what he had said, Mr. Fielding came into the room.

Mrs. Fielding immediately addressed herself to *him*, and took no farther notice of Burleigh during the remainder of the day.

By this behaviour of Olivia's, Burleigh's vexation was considerably increased ; and, as he was much indisposed before, it extremely disordered him. Finding, however, that the more he wished her to relax a little her severity, the more distant she appeared to be, he determined to keep down his feelings, whatever it might cost him. By so doing,

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ing, his mind became so distempered, that his body was in a very declining state.

While he was sitting by her one morning, he was agitated in so violent a manner, that he fell back in his chair, quite oppressed, though he did not absolutely lose his senses.

Olivia could now no longer contain herself: she thought he was actually dying. She screamed; then instantly checking herself, seemed fearful, lest any body should have heard her, as she secretly wished that no body, except herself, might assist him. Flying, therefore, immediately, to him, she supported his head against her side, while she rubbed his hands, and was going to feel for an *eau de luce* bottle.

Charmed

Charmed with those proofs of her regard, he prevented her, by catching her hands in his. He grasped them with so much violence, though it was a tender violence, that she was almost ready to scream a second time. She imputed the warmth of his behaviour to the force of his disorder. It was, indeed, partly owing to *that*; and, as he was additionally affected by his ardent passion for her, he became exceedingly ill.

No body happening to be in the way when Burleigh was taken with his fainting fit, no body heard Mrs. Fielding call for help. When he was a little recovered from the state of insensibility into which he had fallen, he thanked her in the strongest, in the most extravagant terms, indeed, for the concern she had discovered for him, and for her
care :

care: but he delivered himself with such a wildness in his air, and there was such an incoherence in his expressions, that she was thoroughly convinced he was extremely altered. At first, she imagined that his intellects were a little unhinged, and sat looking at him with an increased anxiety in her countenance; still suffering him to hold her hand in his: and he pressed it with a vehemence so unusual, that she could not avoid believing him to be very much disturbed. She had not power, however, to say any thing to him, nor to call for any assistance. She appeared to be quite absorbed in thought.

The entrance of Miss Donne while she was so absorbed, roused her from her *stupor*. Hastily snatching her hand from *his*, she said, "Dear Miss Har-

"riot,

"riot, come and help me to prevail on
"Mr. Burleigh to retire to his own
"apartment, or I must send for Mr.
"Donne and Mr. Fielding; for I am
"sure he is not able to sit up any
"longer."

The good-natured, innocent Harriot did as she was desired, and told Burleigh that she would call the servant to attend him to his apartment.

He made her no answer, but sat with his eyes fixed on Olivia, who gave Harriot a sign to ring the bell. Seizing that moment, while Harriot's back was towards him, he said, softly, to Mrs. Fielding, "I thank you a thousand times for your kind care of me,
"but I shall not want it long: it is too
"much for me to see you in the arms of
"another—

44 "T'WAS WRONG TO MARRY HIM.

"another—yet do not quite forsake me
"while I am alive."

The few last words of his speech were too affecting for Olivia:—tears rushed into her eyes, which she turned hastily from Miss Donne, under pretence of giving her arm to Burleigh, to help him to rise; saying, at the same time, to her, "Do, my dear Harriot, quicken
"the servant."

Burleigh pressed the arm which supported him. When his man came in, Olivia gave him up:—"Your master
"is extremely ill," said she.

When Burleigh retired with his servant, Olivia wiped her eyes, and asked Harriot if she would not let Mr. Donne know how very ill his friend had been.

Har-

Harriot ran out, immediately, to find her father.

Olivia, on her departure, made a violent effort to recover her spirits. She then went to the housekeeper, informed her of Mr. Burleigh's indisposition, and desired her to see that he had every thing necessary for him.

Mrs. Brown went up directly to him. The gentlemen who had been walking in the garden came in with Harriot: Mr. Donne too, when he heard how bad Burleigh had been, paid him a visit.

Mr. Fielding while they were all so employed, asked his wife what was the matter. — He had, indeed, for some days, observed that Burleigh behaved in a particular manner to her: he saw
clearly

clearly too that he was in love with her, and to a degree that rendered him, at times, entirely incapable of keeping his passion under proper restrictions — but as he also saw no kind of impropriety in her behaviour, so discreetly had she conducted herself, he had not deemed it necessary to shorten his visit, and to leave a family with which he spent his time very agreeably; however, when he was informed by Mr. Donne, returning from the sick man's chamber, that he had been put to bed in a raging fever, that he was delirious, and that he raved about Olivia, he began to think it highly incumbent on him to go home.

Mrs. Fielding was present when Mr. Donne related the situation in which he had left Burleigh, but she hurried out of the room as soon as he had finished his

his relation, to hide her concern, and to give a free vent to her tears.

Mr. Fielding soon afterwards followed his wife. Mr. Donne then called his servant, to give him orders about a physician.

When Mr. Fielding entered his wife's apartment, he found her sitting with her elbow on her knee, and covering her face with her handkerchief.

She started at his appearance, and made an exclamation on being surprised by her husband grieving for Burleigh. In the height of her distress she was going to run away from him for a little while, to recover herself, but he stopped her.

Sitting

48 'T WAS WRONG TO MARRY HIM.

Sitting down by her, he said to her,
“ I see, my dear, your concern, and I
“ pity you for it. I have all along per-
“ ceived your distress occasioned by the
“ presence of Mr. Burleigh, tho’ you
“ have behaved with an exemplary pro-
“ priety. Had I any cause to com-
“ plain of you, my rival would not be
“ in this unhappy condition.—Dry your
“ eyes, therefore, my amiable Olivia,
“ from whatever source your tears flow I
“ will do every thing in my power to drive
“ them away—All your sorrow shall be
“ removed, if there is a possibility of its
“ removal. Mr. Burleigh is a very de-
“ serving man, and no woman of sensi-
“ bility, knowing him to be miserable
“ on *her* account can, I think, be un-
“ affected by his unhappiness. I will
“ not, therefore, leave Mr. Donne till
“ Burleigh is out of danger—How-
“ ever,”

"T'WAS WRONG TO MARRY HIM. 49

"ever," added he, "when he is re-
"covered, Olivia, I believe you will
"agree with me that it will be better
"to avoid him."

It is no easy matter to describe Mrs. Fielding's sensations while her husband was speaking to her. When he had closed his address to her, she caught his hand in hers; and, while her tears fell in large drops from her eyes, upon it, she answered, "Oh! Sir; this is too
"much: you are too, too good. I
"will freely confess that I cannot help
"being concerned at Mr. Burleigh's
"illness, as he is the person whom, I
"told you, I preferred to every other
"man, yet I can faithfully assure you
"that I never saw him from the day of
"our marriage till I met with him un-
"expectedly here: nor have I since our
"Vol. II. D "meet-

50 'T WAS WRONG TO MARRY HIM.

"meeting here had a single conversation with him which you could disapprove of — I believe, however," continued she, with a sigh, which she could not stifle, "I believe it will be better for us both that we should never have another interview."

"No, my dear," replied Mr. Fielding, charmed with the frankness of her behaviour, "you shall stay and see him out of danger: you shall even have my consent to do every thing that is necessary towards the restoration of his health, we will then return home."

Olivia's heart was too full to permit her to say what she wished to say to her very considerate, and uncommonly generous husband: she could only express her grateful acknowledgments to him, by putting his hand to her lips.

"Go,

"T'WAS WRONG TO MARRY HIM. 51

"Go, my dear," said he, "go and see your old friend: he may want a good nurse at this time more than a physician."

Olivia still hung back, fearful of taking too much advantage of her husband's consideration for her.

He then took her hand to lead her to Burleigh's chamber.

"Stay," said she: "let me recover myself a little: I would not have him see my tears: I would not have him see the concern which I really feel for him. Nothing, indeed, ought to be wanting on the part of humanity and compassion, but there ought not to be the smallest appearance of affection."

53 'T WAS WRONG TO MARRY HIM.

"What a charming distinction have you made!" cried Mr. Fielding, embracing her: "I cannot be afraid of trusting you any where, my love: go, and may success attend you."

Olivia then went to Burleigh's chamber, but he was too far lost to know her.

She heard him rave, and call upon her in a manner which made her shudder. As the servants, not being accustomed to hear her called Olivia, did not imagine that she was the person so often mentioned by him, she remained unconcerned; and, agreeably to her husband's wishes, perfectly corresponding with her own, attended him.

No man could possibly be more carefully nursed by any woman than Bur-

leigh

leigh was by Olivia, yet she was never a moment alone with him. So artfully, indeed, did she manage matters, that tho' she sat up with him several nights, and saw him take all his medicines, he never, not even when his senses returned, could discover that she was so near him till he was pronounced quite out of danger.—She then determined to leave him for ever, without informing him how much care *she* had taken of him. When he began to grow better, he often saw a female in the room added to his nurse, and the housekeeper, and often inquired who she was; but as they had orders not to talk to him, he did not get the desired information till the very day Mrs. Fielding had resolved to intreat her husband to take her home.

On *that* day, in the morning, the nurse happening to stay below at break-

fast longer than usual, and Mrs. Brown being called out of the room, upon some urgent business, Olivia was left alone with Burleigh. While she was placing the few medicines prescribed for him, which she still continued to range in the order they were to be given to him, she stood with her back towards the bed, but she was so near it, that he could pull her by the gown. Having suspected, for two or three days, that *she* came into his room, he reached out his arm, and caught hold of her.

She turned, and looked frightened.

"Heaven!" cried he—"Mrs. Field."
 "ing? Is it you who have nursed me
 "so carefully? Is it to you to whom I
 "owe my life? What transports! too
 "exquisite to be borne!"

"Hush!"

"Hush!" replied she, with her face and neck like scarlet: "if I have done any thing that has in the least contributed to your ease and happiness, be assured, I have received the only satisfaction I am capable of tasting. do not ask for, do not expect any thing farther from me. I thank heaven that you are recovered—My second request is that you will take the greatest care about the re-establishment of your health, and make no attempts to see me any more.—If you can be sensible, however, of the pleasure which the restoration of your health will give me, you will give yourself the trouble to acquaint me with it."

"Is it possible for me," cried he, pressing her hand to his in an ecstasy, "to refuse you the smallest request; you

56 "I WAS WRONG TO MARRY HIM."

"who have given me new life?—By this
"dear, this kind request—"

"Enough," said she, snatching away
her hand, and hurrying out of the
room.

Hurrying out of the room, she did
not venture to look back till she had
reached her husband's apartment.

As soon as she entered it, she told
him all that had passed between her and
Burleigh—"And now, Sir," added she,
"let me return you my best, my sin-
"cerest thanks for your kind indulgence
"which I have not, indeed, abused; but
"as the very best of us cannot command
"our passions at all times, let me intreat
"you to take me away from this house:
"from every place where I may be liable

"to

"to see Mr. Burleigh again—I wish
"him well, and happy, but I wish never
"to see him any more."

Mr. Fielding took her in his arms,
and called her an angel. Soon after-
wards, telling Mr. Donne that particu-
lar business required his presence at
home, he set out with her.

Mrs. Fielding accompanied her husband
without having made any farther en-
quiries of any kind concerning Bur-
leigh, whom she had left in a transported
state not to be described.—In conse-
quence of the transports which she had
occasioned, his recovery was—however
paradoxical the assertion may appear—
both retarded and forwarded; it was
for some time retarded by the violent
perturbation of his spirits, but when the
D 3 flutters

flutters of joy began to subside; his reflections on Mrs. Fielding's extreme kindness to him were attended with very beneficial effects: he gained strength and spirits every hour, and was able, in a short time, to ride. When he was able to get on horseback, he was powerfully tempted to pay her a profusion of acknowledgments for the exquisite satisfaction she had afforded him; but, recollecting the promise she had exacted from him, with regard to seeing her, he contented himself with writing a letter to her. That letter was the most rapturous one ever penned, but it was also written with a delicacy which could not possibly give the slightest offence.

Olivia read it, and wept over it. Taking up her pen, she was going just to say, in reply, that if he really loved her so much

much as he would make her believe he did, he ought to consult her happiness, which never could be perfect while she was continually put in mind of *him*— But, upon second thoughts, she imagined that she should act more prudently by not writing at all, as her answer might only give birth to a correspondence on no account to to be encouraged. She, therefore, threw her pen away, and would not permit herself, in any of her letters to Lady Dursley, to dwell upon past transactions of the tender kind: she only mentioned Mr. Burleigh as one of the company at Mr. Donne's, and his having been ill of a very bad fever.

Silent, however, as Mrs. Fielding was about Burleigh, he was not so with regard to *her*. Hurrying to her friend,

as soon as he arrived in town, merely to have the pleasure of talking of her, he was both loud and eloquent in her praise. He found Lady Dursley by no means the same woman he had left her. During his absence, the intimacy between Sir James and Miss Monkley had been increasing every day, every hour indeed. — Charlotte, forced at last, to see what could not any longer escape her attention, had fretted exceedingly: fretted, to see the man whom she had so faithfully loved, the man whose indiscreet behaviour to herself she had so freely pardoned, so soon forgetful of the consideration she had shown him, and of the tenderness she had felt for him, as to be publicly fond of another woman, to toy with her, perpetually, before her face. Doubly mortified was she to see the woman, to whom she had been

been so good a friend, return her friendship in so scandalous a manner.

Lady Dursley, at first, prompted by the sensibility of temper natural to her, and by the rectitude of her principles, told Estlin that she thought her conduct too free, and that, though she was herself sure she meant only a little innocent mirth, every body might not be of her opinion, but suppose her to be guilty of follies of which she would blush to be suspected. — "People in general are extremely censorious, and so desirous of blackening reputations, in order to bring the innocent, and the virtuous more upon a level with them, it is, therefore, highly necessary, for young women especially, to be upon their guard, as there are few men who will not take very improper

"proper advantage of the freedoms
"indiscreetly allowed them."

Leticia, though secretly rejoiced to find that Lady Dursley saw Sir James's attentions to her, was yet exceedingly offended at her imagining them to have been occasioned by any advances which she had made to him. Being apprehensive, however, of a quarrel, which might produce her return to her mother, she only drew up her neck, tossed her head, and, with a saucy, sneering smile, flounced out of the room.

The next time she met Sir James, she affected to be very reserved when he attempted to kiss her.

"What's the matter now, child?" said he. "What are these pretty de-

"more airs put on for?"

"Let

"Let me alone, Sir James," replied she, pushing him from her: "Lady Dursley says that I allow you too many liberties, that I shall make people talk, and that I shall lose my character."

A sarcastical laugh was the Baronet's immediate answer. Then, after having repeated the word *character*, with a pretty strong emphasis, he added— "And so my Lady is alarmed about your reputation, my dear! Upon my word, you are obliged to her; but she is, I think, more nice than wise: I shall therefore, desire my wife to mind her own business, and not trouble her head with me, or with any person, with whom I am connected."

64 'T WAS WRONG TO MARRY HIM.

Lætitia, charmed with this reply, was, however, afraid of things going too far.

—“Well, but you had better take no

“notice of what I tell you,” said she;

“there may be a great deal of truth in

“Lady Dursley’s observations—I will

“not suffer you to come near me.”

“Oh! — mighty well,” replied he:

“if you have learnt to be a prude of

“my wife, you may both go to the

“devil—I shall give myself no farther

“trouble about either of you.”

“With all my heart,” answered she;

vexed to the soul at his affected indif-

ference about her—“The greater di-

“stance you keep the better.”

She then took up her work-bag, and

fell to knotting.

Equally

MIN YRRAM OT ONOEW 2AW T
"T'WAS WRONG TO MARRY HIM. 65

Equally mad at her apparent neglect,
he threw himself into the chair next
him, tossed one leg over the other, and
began to whistle.

The louder Sir James whistled, the
louder Lætitia sung; and, at last, drove
him out of the room.

In a violent pet he quitted the room—
Lady Dursley meeting him soon after-
wards, and seeing him displeased at the
sight of her, took hold of his hand in
the most affectionate manner—"You
are not well, Sir James, I am afraid."

"Why, Madam," answered he, with
a surly air, "should you imagine that
"I am ill?"

"I am

66 'Twas Wrong to Marry Him.

"I am apprehensive, my dear," said she, timidly, "that you are either out of order, or that something has happened to displease you."

With a reply still more ill-natured than the former, he flung out of the room; and she, not having ever heard him speak to her so harshly before, retired to her closet in tears.

Lætitia, having now vented her ill-humour, and having been, for some time, never so well-pleased as when Sir James was playing the fool with her, began to be sorry that she had insisted upon his keeping at a distance, and to consider by what means she should draw him to her again. He, on the other hand, disgusted both with *her* and his wife, thought of looking out for a woman

woman somewhere else, more suitable to his purpose.

In this humour they all met at dinner,

Lady Dursley's eyes were red with weeping, though she had washed them, and done every thing she could think of to conceal the appearance of any uneasiness, at the very time that her bosom was ready to burst with the sighs which shook it.

Miss Monkley, on the contrary, had dressed herself with the most coquette air imaginable: there was a kind of inviting looseness in her whole appearance. She affected to be uncommonly serious, but cast the shyest side glances at Sir James, from a pair of the most languishing eyes, to be conceived.

Sir

Sir James seemed to be attentive only to the business before him. Not being just then disposed to converse, he ate heartily, but Lætitia's glances were not entirely thrown away upon him.

As for poor Lady Dursley, she scarce swallowed a morsel. More than once did she address herself to Sir James in the most affectionate manner: but his replies were only the monosyllables YES and NO, articulated in a surly tone.

After having sat the usual time, and found that he only picked his teeth, without speaking to any body, she left the room, unable to conceal the anxiety which she felt from the disagreeable change in his behaviour to her.

When

When she was gone, Lætitia, who did not feel herself inclined to make concessions first, though exceedingly disposed to be reconciled to the Baronet, began to tie and untie her breast-knots so often, that he, whose eyes had been, for some minutes, fixed on her bosom, displayed to more advantage than usual, advanced his hand, and stooped so close, that his lips almost touched it.

She started back — "Bless me," cried she, with an affected blush, "what are you doing, Sir James?" — "I want to tie that ribbon for you, my dear," said he, catching hold of it, and pulling her to him; "as I see you are incapable of tying it yourself."

This movement was what the Lady wanted—She pretended to make a violent resistance, but suffered him, in the struggle, to take a great many more liberties than he had ever yet ventured upon: liberties which he found extremely agreeable to her taste. She longed indeed to go as far as she could, but her apprehensions with regard to *consequences* restrained her.

Sir James was now quite sure of her. He was a little piqued at her still holding out; but, as he found that she *would* have her own way; and, as he was morally sure of her yielding at last, he became contented to take her upon her own terms; imagining, also, that by a compliance with those terms, he should heighten the pleasure arising from his triumph over her virtue.

These

These resolutions on both sides made Sir James and Lætitia the very best friends in the world. They played all day like a couple of kittens, entirely regardless of Lady Dursley, who seeing that her admonitions had no sort of effect upon Lætitia, as she absolutely laughed in her face, and that her kindness was quite lost upon Sir James, now the coolest, most indifferent, most fashionable of husbands, gave herself up to the sharpest disquiet. Not a creature had she near her to whom she could open her heart; and, by so doing, gain some alleviation of her uneasiness: nor could she well write to Mrs. Fielding upon the subject which engrossed her attention, and preyed upon her spirits, because Miss Monkley was her relation, and the daughter of that friend to whom she had been so much obliged. Amidst
all

all her uneasinesses, however, upon her own account, she was still concerned for Lætitia, whose ruin she looked upon as inevitable, and blamed herself a thousand times for having invited her to be with her. She felt, indeed, that she had, by inviting her to her house, taken a very wrong step; that she had acted quite in opposition to the opinion of Mr. Fawley, whose advice, on every occasion, was judicious. — “Had I taken *his* advice,” said she, often to herself, sighing, “I should have been happy.”

While she sat, one day, buried in reflections of this kind, Fawley, in consequence of what Burleigh had communicated to him before he left London, made his appearance.

He

He accosted her with a respectful, but with a sort of suppressed tenderness in his air and manner; and while he looked at her, and enquired after her health, sighed to see her appear so pale, so thin. Before she answered his first question, he could not help adding, "I am infinitely concerned to find you are not well, Lady Dursley."

"I thank you, Sir," replied she, with an obliging, yet melancholy smile; "but I am not sick."

"It is an awkward compliment, I am sensible, Madam," answered he, "to tell a Lady that she looks ill.—I hope, most sincerely, that I am mistaken; but I fear, indeed, that you are neither *well* nor *happy*."—Would to heaven," added he, still more fervently, VOL. II. E "that

"that it was in my power to make you
 "as well and as happy as you deserve
 "to be."

Poor Lady Dursley's heart, already
 softened by her tender griefs, was consi-
 derably touched by Fawley's kind wish-
 es, still more touched by the ardent
 manner in which he uttered them. Lift-
 ing up her moistened eyes, in which the
 anguish of her mind was strongly paint-
 ed, and then casting them down again,
 she said, "Oh, Mr. Fawley, had I but
 "listened to *your* friendly, *your* sensible
 "advice, I had not been so miserable as
 "I now am, nor quite so wretched."

The moment these words had escaped
 her, she became sensible of the impro-
 priety of them. She considered, but
 too late, that no woman should, if pos-
 sible,

sible, complain of her husband, not to any other man, at least: but when she again considered that the man to whom she had complained, had never been a lover, that he was only a disinterested friend, she thought she had not been so much to blame. She very readily, therefore, resigned the hand to him which he had taken in his during the utterance of the above-mentioned exclamation.

While he was lamenting with her that she had any reason to be uneasy, and intreating her to tell him what it was, that he might, if it was in his power, assist her in the removal of it, Charlotte doubted whether she ought to complain of Sir James: there is something, however, so alleviating in the communication of one's heart-felt sorrows to a sincere friend, that she, at last, prevailed on herself to

discover the secret cause of her distress ; yet not till she had strictly enjoined Fawley never to mention either that cause or *her* to Sir James ; as she found him, she added, of a temper which could neither bear reproof nor advice ; and, as she feared, the smallest objections to his conduct, though urged with the most friendly views of serving them both, would only make him doubly determined to follow his own inclinations.

Fawley, who adored Charlotte's gentleness and discretion, subscribed to all she had said, and highly commended all she had done, but declared, at the same time, that he did not know how to support the sight of her labouring under such unmerited treatment, without making *some* attempt to deliver her from it.

“ See

" See me, then, no more, good Mr. Fawley," replied she; " for as it is impossible for you to relieve me, it will greatly add to my affliction, to find you rendered unhappy upon my account."

" I have so true a regard for your felicity, Lady Dursley," answered he, " that I would undertake any thing to ensure it. I must also inform you, that I shall have no rest while your peace is disturbed; and yet I cannot deprive myself of the desire I shall ever feel to be near you, in order to offer you my assistance should it be wanted."

" You are, indeed, a true friend," replied she, with an affectionate but languid smile.

78 'T WAS WRONG TO MARRY HIM.

" *I would have been* the truest of friends,
" *I would have been* the most ardent of
" *lovers, I would have been* the kindest
" of protectors had my fortune been
" equal to my wishes."

He spoke the few last words with such energy, that his spirits were considerably agitated.

Charlotte's face was covered with blushes—she sighed—deeply sighed, because Sir James was not such a man; was not a *Fawley*. She sat, with her eyes cast down; her bosom heaved with her sorrows—She condemned herself severely for the choice she had made.—She doated, however, at the same time, on this Sir James, this very husband who so cruelly neglected her for one of the most worthless of her sex—She wished that either *Fawley*
had

had Sir James's person, or that Sir James had *Fawley's* mind.

Fawley, apprehensive that he might have said too much to Lady Dursley, and that it might have induced her to be shy of him, watched her every look and motion, and could not be satisfied till he had intreated her to pardon him if the warmth of his friendship or his earnest desire to see, to make her happy, had hurried him beyond the limits which the delicacy due to her had marked out

This little apology for the effusions of his heart had such an effect upon Charlotte, that she beheld him exactly in the light in which he wished to be viewed by her, and construed his ardent love into the purest, most refined friendship. His whole manner, indeed, was

so extremely soothing, and there was so much respect mingled with his tender esteem, that she could not possibly be offended with his behaviour—Far from being offended with it, she received great consolation from it: as much consolation as her very ineligible condition would admit of. He left her, therefore, after having begged leave to see her again, in a more composed state of mind—In spite of her additional provocations, she always received some ease from *his* friendly endeavours to console her.

Sir James and Lætitia were now too deeply engaged together to trouble themselves about Charlotte. The latter was too powerfully tempted to be capable of making the resistance she had intended: the *former* only suffered her to elude
his

his attacks from time to time, that he might heighten the pleasure, by his artful, amorous delay.

Fawley, seeing Lady Dursley's anxiety increase, proposed to her the making one attempt to save her rival from the ruin with which she was threatened; he proposed her writing to Mrs. Monkley to tell her of her daughter's danger, and to desire her to send for her home.

Charlotte greatly approved of this proposal, and thought that she could not, in honour, neglect any thing in her power to save Lætitia, to save her husband also from the pangs of repentance, of a long repentance for a very fleeting pleasure: she, accordingly, wrote a very particular, and affecting state of the case to Mrs. Monkley; telling her, at the

same time, that she would have informed her of the affair before, had she not hoped to have prevailed on Lætitia to be discreet without giving her the pain of knowing she had been ever inclined to deviate from discretion. She then requested her to avail herself of her parental authority, and to send for her daughter, that neither Sir James, nor herself might be suspected of having any thing to do in the business; that Miss Monkley might have no suspicions concerning the cause of her recall. Charlotte also earnestly advised Mrs. Monkley not to seem acquainted with what she had communicated to her, but only to watch her daughter on her coming home, as Sir James would, probably, follow her, or endeavour, at least, to correspond with her.

When

When Lady Dursley had finished her letter, she shewed it to Fawley who frequently waited on her. He declared that it was not only the properest letter ever penned, but actually a very elegant composition.

Charlotte blushed at his flattering encomiums, and the beautiful expression which the goodness of her heart threw into her looks, occasioned some additional ones.

This letter was immediately dispatched, and had so far the desired effect as to make Mrs. Monkley send directly to order Lætitia to return to her.

Her orders to Lætitia were accompanied with a letter to Lady Dursley, in which she made a number of acknow-

ledgments for her many great civilities to her daughter, begging her to permit her return home, as she very much wanted her.

By this letter Charlotte found that Mrs. Monkley perfectly understood her, and was pleased at her falling in so readily with her designs.

This intelligence was received in a quite different manner by Lætitia, and even by Sir James, to whom she shewed her mother's peremptory letter.

"I cannot imagine," said she to him, "what has come into my mother's head to send for me just now."

"No matter what," replied Sir James, "you shall not go."

"How

"How can I help it, if my Lady
"does not ask me to stay?"

"I will ask you."

"But that will not do—It will look
"particular, and I shall have *her* always
"pouting and glouting at me."

"She shall not dare to look at you,
"but just as I will have her," said Sir
James—"Be a good girl, come and kiss
"me, leave every thing to *me*," con-
tinued he, pulling her into his lap, "and
"all shall be well."

The approach of Lady Dursley made
Lætitia suddenly start from his lap.
While my Lady came in at one door,
she ran out at the other.

"So child," said Sir James, with a
careless air, "Letty has been telling me
"that

86 'T WAS WRONG TO MARRY HIM.

"that Mrs. Monkley has sent for her
"to come home; but you will not per-
"mit her to go, I suppose."

"That must be as Mrs. Monkley and
"Laetitia agree about it," replied Lady
Dursley. "If her mother wants her, it
"would be very unkind, you know,
"Sir James, to detain her."

"Pshaw!—what can she want with
"her? Besides, the girl does not like
"to go, and she cannot stay with any
"propriety if you do not press her—
"Insist, therefore, upon her remaining
"here, and write to Mrs. Monkley to
"inform her that you cannot spare her."

Charlotte's face glowed with vexation
at seeing her fine scheme, so nearly exe-
cuted, come to nothing; ever-gentle,
however,

however, ever obedient, she made no opposition to Sir James's desire, or rather command—She retired to lament her disappointment in private: a disappointment which clearly convinced her that her unhappiness was never to be removed, as Sir James had never before so openly taken Lætitia's part; had never discovered so strong an inclination to have her with him.—The uneasiness which she felt upon this very trying occasion confined her to her own chamber all the morning.

Miss Monkley began now to grow anxious and uneasy, in her turn—finding that Lady Dursley would not comply with Sir James's desires, and that she must either go, or stay upon the most disagreeable footing to be conceived, she was extremely out of temper:

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per: she even kept Sir James at a greater distance than usual. On his asking her what made her so cold and so coy, she told him she was not in a humour to be trifled with while my Lady treated her with so much disrespect and neglect.

Dursley thus inflamed against his wife, flew into her dressing-room, where she had but just dried her eyes, and made herself fit to be seen.

He asked her, immediately, and with impetuosity, whether Letty had consented to stay or no.

"I cannot tell," replied she, gravely.

"How the devil should you tell," answered he, fiercely, "if you persist in not asking her? but you will not ask

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"ask her because you see I have a mind
 "to have her here—You *shall*, how-
 "ever: not that I care three farthings
 "for the girl, but when people are in
 "my house I do not like to be rude to
 "them; and I will not suffer any body
 "else to be so."

"Indeed, Sir James," replied Char-
 lotte, melting into a fresh shower of
 tears; "I do not like to be rude, nei-
 "ther, to any body, nor do I mean, I
 "am sure, to displease *you*."

"What do you whimper for then?—
 "Go—do as I desire, and let me hear
 "no more of it."

Charlotte, pained, beyond expression,
 not only at his visible fondness for Læ-
 titia, but at his manner of treating
 her,

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her, said she would go presently, but was not really just then very fit to speak to any body, as she had been ill all the morning with a violent pain in her head.

He then muttered something about peoples having more ill humour, than ill health.

While he was muttering those words, she sat down once again to lament her hard fate, and to endeavour to compose herself, that she might comply with his orders.—The shock, however, which those orders had given her—a shock which she never should recover, she thought—affected her so much, that she could not bring herself to leave the room directly, and to press Lætitia to continue with her.—She, therefore, intended to let it
alone

alone till chance gave her an opportunity to say something concerning it: but Sir James and Lætitia were both so highly offended at *her* behaviour, and looked, in so particular a manner, at each other, that she was thrown into the greatest embarrassments. At last, however, seeing Sir James put on a very frowning aspect at her, whenever he turned towards her, she asked Lætitia, one day, when she designed to answer her mother's letter.

"There will be no occasion to answer it at all," answered she, pertly, "as I am going so soon."

"But you must not go," replied Lady Dursley, though in a tone which plainly shewed that she wished her many miles from her.—"I dare say, if you
write

"write to Mrs. Monkley, she will give
 "you leave to stay in London a little
 "longer."

"Ay, ay, write, Letty," cried Sir
 James. — "I know Charlotte cannot
 "spare you."

Lætitia affected to comply, with reluctance: she was not, indeed, at all pleased with the forced manner in which Charlotte had desired the continuation of her residence in town. The thoughts of triumphing over Charlotte, and the secret pleasure she found in the caresses of Sir James, made her put up with it. She determined, however, to be revenged of Lady Dursley, for the indifference which she discovered about her.

"But

"But what will my asking my mother to let me stay," said she, "signify? She will only impute it to my fondness for the diversions of the town, if Lady Dursley does not, herself, write to her, to tell her that she wishes to have me longer with her."

"Why, ay," replied Sir James, "that is true: *You* must write, Charlotte—what *you* say will have much more weight with Mrs. Monkley, I am sure."

Poor Charlotte made no answer, but she resolved to state the case to her exactly as it was. She retired, therefore, to her own apartment, and left Lætitia and Sir James together.

Lætitia

Lætitia then told Sir James she was certain that Lady Dursley could not endure to have her stay; and that she would tell her mother something or other, to make her insist upon her coming home.

"You shall not go for all that," said he: "do only as I bid you, and leave me to manage my wife."

This speech brought on a great deal of idle raillery on the part of Lætitia, which Sir James answered, by taking a greater number of liberties than usual: liberties which, if Fawley's appearance had not put a stop to them, might have been carried to the most indiscreet lengths.

In

In a short time after Fawley's arrival, Lady Dursley, having finished her letter, came down, though she did not know that he was in the house.

Sir James, soon afterwards, went out, first asking my Lady, however, if she had been writing to Mrs. Monkley.

Her reply was in the affirmative.

"If your letter is quite finished then, my dear," answered he, with great good humour, "I will put it into the post-office: I am going that way, and shall leave a letter of my own at the same time."

This proposal entirely disconcerted Charlotte: not that she in the least imagined he would think of opening it, but

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but she had a mind to have looked over it once more: she therefore excused herself, by saying it was not sealed.

"If that is all," replied he, "I will seal it for you."

"There is no occasion, Sir James," said she, colouring excessively, "to give you so much trouble—I will fetch it, if you desire it," continued she, seeing him, with no pleasure, look at her with scrutinizing eyes.

Running up stairs, she sealed her letter, and then brought it to Sir James, with a trembling hand.

Hertremor made him suspect that there was something more in it than he had at first imagined.

Snatching it eagerly from her, he took up his hat, and stepped into his chariot,

chariot, ordering *John* to stop at the post-house.

Soon after Sir James's departure, *Læticia*, who had long given over all hopes of making any thing of Mr. Fawley, went up stairs, to adjust her hair, &c. &c. which were not a little discomposed by Sir James's too near approaches.

As soon as she was gone, Lady Dursley acquainted Fawley with all that had passed, and could not conceal her terrors about her letter.

Fawley told her, that he really thought her terrors were groundless, as he could not believe any man would be so mean as to open a letter entrusted to his care.

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This answer, accompanied with a thousand little soothing endeavours to chace away from her bosom all its anxieties, restored her, at length, to her former tranquillity. She began to feel her mind at ease in his company: she sighed, however, when she reflected upon the immense difference between the *husband* and the *friend*.

Fawley, who pitied her exceedingly, hearing, with much uneasiness, her frequent sighs, took uncommon pains to divert her, and to give a new turn to her thoughts. His efforts were so successful, that, when he left her, she felt no disquiet, but on account of *his* absence: when he quitted the room, all her gloomy and disagreeable ideas repossessed her mind. She beheld Lætitia with a disgust, with an abhorrence which
became

became insupportable: and even Sir James, when compared with Fawley, ceased to be so amiable as she had been accustomed to think him. Hurt, beyond expression, by those ideas, for the indulgence of which she severely condemned herself, she sat in a pensive attitude, oppressed with numberless tormenting reflections.

While she was in that attitude, a thundering noise at the door announced company.

Just when she was going to rouse herself from her lethargic situation, the door opened, and in bounced Sir James, with a letter in his hand, open; and with a countenance in which anger, and a kind of sarcastical contempt, were painted with equal force.

Lady Dursley, having generally seen him with pleasure, received him with a most obliging smile.

With a fierceness in his aspect, which both astonished and terrified her, he cried,
 “ So, Madam, you *have* wrote to Mrs.
 “ Monkley, but in a manner very dif-
 “ ferent from that which I expected :
 “ in a manner, indeed, of which I could
 “ not have believed you capable—Your
 “ suspicions about me and Miss Monk-
 “ ley are as ill grounded as they are
 “ injurious : they are scandalous : Most
 “ vile are the insinuations which you
 “ have attempted to send to Mrs. Monk-
 “ ley—Attempted do I say ? which you
 “ *have* sent, indeed ; for this letter is
 “ nothing, I find, to your first in the
 “ *same style*.—Amazing ! that I should
 “ be so deceived in you ! in *you*, whom,
 “ of

“ of all people, I imagined to be so
“ mild, so good, so partial to me—for
“ *you* to suspect an innocent girl, who
“ had lived with you long before I mar-
“ ried you, the daughter of your friend
“ too—and to think *me* capable of se-
“ ducing her — *me*, who have been so
“ long, so tenderly attached to you?
“ who could not bring myself to en-
“ tertain thoughts of any other wo-
“ man? — But there is no trusting a
“ single creature of your sex, since *you*,
“ Charlotte, whom I believed to be an
“ angel, have so grossly endeavoured
“ to dupe me. However, I am glad I
“ opened your letter, as I have, by so
“ doing, prevented the conveyance of
“ any more unjust suspicions to poor,
“ good Mrs. Monkley, who must have
“ already been made extremely uneasy
“ by what you have written to her con-

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“ cerning her daughter. I hope, there-
“ fore, you will consider what a pa-
“ rent must necessarily suffer by such
“ shameful inuendoes, and write imme-
“ diately, to retract all you have said to
“ her concerning her daughter. You
“ can never, indeed, make them suffi-
“ cient amends for the mischief you
“ have done them; but it is your duty
“ to make them all the reparation for
“ it in your power, and I expect you to
“ set about it without delay.”

Poor Charlotte, during this severe harangue, delivered with a fierce, imperious, sarcastical tone, stood almost petrified with astonishment, shame, and vexation. Astonished she could not but be, at Sir James's having opened her letter, ashamed she certainly was at having her complaints against Lætitia to
her

her mother discovered, and having accused Sir James of attempting to seduce her. Vexed too she was extremely at finding that all she had done would avail her nothing, that it would rather tend to make bad worse, as neither Sir James nor Lætitia would, she supposed, keep any measures with her, after such a detection. She was also entirely confounded: she did not know what to say: she wished to invent something by way of apologizing for what had passed, blushing, at the same time, to think that any apology for her conduct was necessary, as she was secretly conscious of having acted a very friendly part in acquainting Mrs. Monkley with her daughter's indiscretion, putting Sir James quite out of the question.

Charlotte, intimidated by Sir James's fiery looks and sharp words, felt herself unable to contend with him.—She could not add any thing in her justification, nor could she tell how to stand still and bear such unmerited treatment : mild as she naturally was, she now thought it incumbent on her to assume a proper pride, in order to keep up a dignity suitable to her station ; she endeavoured to recover her spirits, but not being in a condition to return an immediate answer, Sir James took a cruel advantage of her silence, by considering it as a confirmation of her guilt. He loaded her with fresh reproaches, hoping by *them* to overwhelm her quite, and to prevent her from uttering a single syllable in her defence.—His new and still more poignant reproaches were so very provoking, that she could not any longer smother her
resent-

resentment. She could not help saying, with some tartness, " When people have
" been mean enough to break open private letters, their assertions on any occasion are not to be credited. Let
" *their* opinions be what they will, I
" shall continue to act agreeably to my
" own sentiments of rectitude which
" have hitherto governed my conduct,
" and from which nothing in the world
" shall tempt me to swerve."

With these words, which she had pronounced with a faltering voice, and which were accompanied with tears, the mingled tears of grief and resentment, she left the room.

Sir James, who had not expected to find such a spirit of opposition in his wife, felt himself most highly offended,

having imagined that she would have been both humbled and mortified at the discovery of a clandestine correspondence: that she would have said nothing, at least, if she could not have brought herself to make any concessions. He was, indeed, so disappointed, so disgusted, that he thought he should stand in no need of an apology for his future behaviour to Lætitia, whom he determined to substitute in Lady Dursley's stead, in his heart.

Having sent for Lætitia, Sir James shewed her the letter—(to complete his triumph over Charlotte)—which he had torn open, and which he had read at the coffee-house several times before he could believe his eyes: hardly thinking it possible for the writer of it to attempt to make such a dupe of him, and not being

ing willing to upbraid her till he was thoroughly assured she deserved his reproaches, as a false accusation might have been attended with the most pernicious consequences.

Lætitia, though she had long thought that Lady Dursley had suspected her, did not in the least imagine that she would have carried matters so far; and as she was really, at that time, not conscious of having injured her by her behaviour to Sir James, she thought herself extremely ill treated: she resolved, therefore, to set no bounds to her resentment: by Sir James's advice, however, she also resolved to keep it under, and not to let it appear till a proper opportunity offered for her giving a loose to it.

In consequence of this new mode of proceeding settled between Sir James and Lætitia, neither of them took any farther notice of what was past. The former was cool, negligent, and insolent; the latter was pert, proud, and saucy, presuming upon her virtue, which was but in a very tottering condition.

Prompted by Sir James, however, Lætitia wrote immediately to her mother, contradicted every thing that Lady Dursley had said, and assured her that there was not the slightest foundation for it, except her strange jealousy on Sir James's account, which made her try to hinder him from speaking to any other woman; adding, that *he* was the fondest, the best of husbands.

While

While these two were thus assisting each other in doing every thing they well could to provoke, and mortify Charlotte, *she* felt most severely her husband's indifference, and the insolent pride of Lætitia, but she could not, without coming to an open quarrel, take any notice of the former or of the latter. Distressed in this manner, and wounded in the tenderest part, she had no relief, no sort of consolation, but what she received from Fawley's compassion and tenderness. Fawley, indeed, kept his tenderness within the bounds of that respect which her situation required, but it made a very strong impression upon her; it touched her indeed so sensibly, that she was sometimes afraid of herself, and condemned herself severely for being so much pleased with the behaviour of a man whom she could not, she imagined,

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imagined, circumstanced as she was, think well of without entertaining criminal sentiments. At other times she blamed herself for not doing him the justice which he, in her opinion, deserved on account of his own intrinsic merit, and of his particular regard for *her*, of the share he took in her afflictions which he perpetually endeavoured to alleviate.

In this situation was she when Burleigh, just recovered from his fever, returned to London.

On his return to London, Burleigh made Grosvenor-street the first place he called at. His heart was replete with the most ardent tenderness; it was warmed also with the most lively gratitude in consequence of Olivia's affectionate care of him.—As soon as he saw
Lady

Lady Dursley, he not only made her stare by the terms in which he spoke of her friend Mrs. Fielding, but raised tumults in her bosom not easily to be quelled. She could not help being surprised to hear of the lengths which Olivia had gone; she could not help, also, thinking her a very happy woman, not only to be so sincerely, so ardently beloved, but to have had it in her power to give so many striking proofs of her regard, without being guilty of any indelicacies, without being censured for her behaviour: yet his relation of her behaviour appeared so astonishing to her, that she could scarce give credit to it. She sometimes fancied that he had spoken in too large a way from the warmth of his passion; especially as Olivia had not, in any of her letters, made any mention of an event so very uncommon.

When

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When Burleigh left her, Charlotte sat down to write to Olivia, related all that she had heard concerning her, in the relator's own words; and desired her to inform her if his communications were literally true; gently chiding her, at the same time, for her concealments.

While Charlotte was thus employed, she forgot, for a few moments, Sir James's ill usage, and the impertinences and insolences of Lætitia, who, being both encouraged and supported by him, gave an unlimited loose to them, in order to be revenged on her for having wrote to acquaint her mother with her indiscereton. In return for Sir James's humouring her, and and to gratify her own inclinations, which were not the purest imaginable, she suffered him to
take

take all kinds of liberties with her. She, at length, indeed, put it out of her power to deny him any thing. However, though she indulged both him and herself in those pleasures which most commonly produce disgust if pursued with too great avidity, she had the art to keep up a sort of superiority over him, which rendered him a thousand times more subservient to her will than he had ever been to Lady Dursley's: Lætitia was, in fact, one of those females who possess all the allurements to vice with all the outward appearances of virtue; and could, whenever she pleased, look the most chaste, or the loosest of her sex: a character in the highest degree dangerous, as it is inexpressibly seducing to men who are naturally of a licentious turn. Sir James being strongly of *that turn*, found infinitely more charms

charms in the company of such a wanton girl as Lætitia, than in the modest endearments of a wife so perfectly good and amiable as Charlotte.

Charlotte, seeing that every thing she said and did to reform Sir James, and to reclaim Lætitia, was to no purpose, ceased endeavouring to effect impossibilities. Her mind was continually disturbed by *them* on one side, and by the growing regard which she involuntarily felt for a man so totally different from her husband, for Fawley, on the other. She now actually wondered how she came to bestow a single thought on Sir James, when she saw him destitute of all those amiable, those desirable qualities, by which his rival was so conspicuously distinguished. She now wondered at her having been so long blind to Fawley's

ley's virtues, and at her imagining that a man who behaved grossly to her *before* marriage, could possibly treat her with that delicacy of affection which can alone constitute the happiness of a virtuous woman: a happiness she could never, she now feared, enjoy with the man whom she had married. A man of *his* principles can never long continue faithful to such a woman as Lady Dursley; to any woman, indeed, but to one as artful as Lætitia.

Lætitia was now become so tyrannical, that she was not contented with alienating Sir James's affections from my Lady, and making him behave to her in a manner at once unkind, and indelicate; she absolutely threatened to expose his conduct to Lady Dursley's friends, to the whole world, if the former

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mer had no effect upon him. Thus menaced and soothed, alternately, by Lætitia, Sir James paid far more attention than ever he had paid to Lady Dursley, who soon became quite neglected, and overlooked by them both.

While Sir James and Lætitia, however, gave a loose to their vicious inclinations, Mrs. Monkley grew extremely uneasy about her daughter. To pacify *her*, Sir James, at the instigation of Lætitia, wrote a letter to her. In that letter he told her he was very sorry to find Lady Dursley had, blinded by envy and jealousy, given her so false an account of her daughter's conduct, which was, he assured her, perfectly discreet; he added, that as every body admired her for her person and manners, equally captivating, his wife had been weak
enough,

enough, he supposed, to endeavour to get rid of her, lest she should be eclipsed by so fine a girl.

This letter, which contained many other passages of a similar nature, Sir James dispatched to Mrs. Monkley, in order to keep her quiet, and to make her satisfied with her daughter's continuance in London:—but his letter by no means answered his expectations.

Mrs. Monkley, finding herself more inclined to believe Lady Dursley than Sir James, sent a messenger, with her particular commands to her daughter, to come to her directly.

This blow Lætitia could not well ward off: and yet it was death to her

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to think of returning to the country. There were many reasons, indeed, conspiring to set her against it:—still flattering herself too with the hopes of settling herself advantageously by a lucrative marriage, she positively resolved to elude a compliance with her mother's commands. She was very sensible that at home she should pine away her days in solitude, in a poor, and, in all probability, a shameful solitude, in consequence of the irregularity of her conduct. She, therefore, answered her mother's letter, by begging her not to insist upon her leaving London just then, as she had the greatest prospect of making her fortune, by marrying a gentleman whom she had lately met with, and who had taken a violent fancy to her; adding, that it would take up some time to manage a point of so much im-

importance to her future happiness; and that she was sure her mother loved her too much, not to wish for it as earnestly as she herself did. In short, the letter was wrote with such art, and, apparently, in so dutiful and affectionate a manner, that poor Mrs. Monkley, not knowing what to do, suffered her to remain a little longer in London: not because she approved of that permission, but merely because she could not tell how to get her away from thence. She was also somewhat inclined to consent to her staying in Grosvenor-street, with so good a prospect in her eye, as she knew that Mrs. Fielding had married very advantageously. Like a partial mother, she thought her own daughter equally agreeable, and consequently entitled to equal success.

Mrs.

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Mrs. Monkley was the more inclined to let Lætitia remain in town, as she sometimes, deceived by her artful behaviour, began to fancy that Lady Dursley might have embellished her intelligence relating to her daughter, with some deviations from truth, by harbouring injurious and unjust suspicions with regard to Sir James. Knowing that she was excessively fond of him, she thought that she might, perhaps, suspect every other woman of being as strongly prejudiced in his favour. She thought also, that if Lætitia's conduct had been so very blameable, Mrs. Fielding would certainly have mentioned it, as it could not be supposed, from the great intimacy which had so many years subsisted between her and Lady Dursley, but that the latter must have communicated every secret of her heart to the former;

former, and that Olivia, out of friendship, would have warned her of the danger her cousin was in, and would have been the first to remove her from it.

Mrs. Monkley, however, was here mistaken — Mrs. Fielding was entirely ignorant of every thing relating to Lætitia since she had been in London, as Lady Dursley, thro' delicacy had forbore to find fault where she could not commend, and never would have written in the manner she did to her mother, but to save her from ruin. Having taken her from her mother, and thrown her into the way of temptation, Lady Dursley thought it particularly incumbent on her to snatch her from destruction, if possible: finding, however, that all her attempts were vain, she could

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only endeavour not to see what was, nevertheless, extremely visible.

Charlotte, at times, also strove to shut her eyes against Fawley's numerous and powerful attractions which her passion for Sir James had prevented her from discovering before: she tried likewise to be blind to his perpetual efforts to amuse, to sooth, to please her: but she could not be unaffected by them: there was something so inexpressibly agreeable in the continual and respectful attentions of such a man, that the most reserved, the most rigid woman could scarce have steeld her heart against him: yet she secretly condemned herself for her too great sensibility.—“I have suffered
“sufficiently for it already; shall I then
“again be lost by it? lost to my own
“good

"good opinion, as well as to that of
"the world." While she was engaged in this train
of thinking, a letter from Mrs. Field-
ing confirmed her in it.

This letter brought a full answer to
the queries which she had proposed to
her relating to Burleigh.—"Every word
"he has told you is a fact, but I could
"wish to hear that he had never men-
"tioned them, as his being still so pleased
"with my behaviour to *him*, and still
"so attached to *me*, keeps alive in my
"heart a passion which the duty I owe
"to the best of husbands, and the duty
"which I owe myself forbid me to indulge.
"For these reasons, I suppressed the very
"strong inclination I felt to open my heart
"to you about a man who has too great

" a share in it. I would not, indeed,
 " venture to speak of him at all, lest I
 " might have been tempted to have said
 " too much.—I wish not to see him again
 " —as it is my duty, it ought to be my
 " desire to forget him. Never mention
 " him again, therefore, my dear Char-
 " lotte, if you value the peace of

" Your OLIVIA."

No sooner had Charlotte read this
 letter than she exclaimed—" And shall
 " I be weaker than my friend! shall I,
 " who have not experienced half *her*
 " temptations, shall I yield to a passion
 " the indulgence of which must lower
 " me in every body's eyes? For suppo-
 " sing Sir James to be more culpable
 " than he really is, his ill conduct can
 " in no shape excuse mine. Besides,
 " have I not an excellent, an uncom-
 " mon

“mon example of fortitude in Olivia,
“who, tho’ she has the greatest reason
“in the world to esteem, to love Bur-
“leigh, will not, as she cannot with-
“out revolting against those principles
“of virtue, gratitude, and delicacy,
“which *should* govern every woman’s
“thoughts as well as actions, allow her-
“self to mention him even to her near-
“est and dearest friend? How much
“do I honour her for thus gloriously
“maintaining such a conquest over her
“passions! I will endeavour to imitate
“her, as far as it is in my power.”

In consequence of this discreet resolution, Lady Dursley received Fawley the next time he came, with great civility, but with greater reserve than ever.

He saw, he felt a change which could not but affect him, yet he owed her too

much consideration to venture to complain.—He began, indeed, to fear that he had already been guilty of taking *some* freedoms which might have disconcerted her; but as he never had intended to take *such* freedoms, he could not recollect them. However, that he might be sure not to offend in that way again, he resolved to keep a strict watch over his actions and expressions: by squaring his behaviour according to this resolution he became infinitely less agreeable than ever he had been: his stiff, reserved, dejected air, tho' it did not absolutely disgust, both embarrassed, and fretted her. Sometimes she fancied him melancholy about *her*; sometimes she thought his dullness and heaviness were occasioned by the rambling of his ideas after *some* other woman. By these conjectures, she was, in spite of all her discretion,

cretion,

cretion, rendered pensive and uneasy. She wished to be loved by somebody; she found she was not loved by Sir James. Flattering herself that one of the most amiable, the most deserving of men in the world tenderly esteemed her, she could not bear to be disappointed.—Apprehensive too that she *had* lost, or was going to lose the regard of *him* who was now become of more importance to her than she could have imagined, she grew serious, thoughtful, and absent.—Yet whenever she addressed herself to Fawley, she always spoke to him in accents so soft, and soothing, that they went to his heart. Encouraged by those accents, he began to think that he had been mistaken about her, that she could not be offended with him, and that whatever had made her shy and reserved for a day or two, he had no share in it,

as she was now more obliging to him than ever.—His second thoughts were of a different kind: “The alteration which I observe in *her* behaviour may have been occasioned by the alteration in *mine*; by the great care I have taken not to say or do any thing to displease her.”

Influenced by these reflections, he determined to be still more careful, for the future, in order to keep her in the present humour which was so exceedingly agreeable to him.

By their mutual endeavours to behave with the strictest propriety, Lady Durdley and Fawley, became doubly pleasing to each other, and their esteem for each other increased every day.

Lady

Lady Dursley, however, in a short time, began to distrust herself again, and to fear that she should not be always able to conceal those sentiments which she felt gaining ground in Fawley's favour, but which she had hitherto, by her discreet vigilance over herself, prevented him from discovering.

From Lætitia too Lady Dursley was fortunate enough to keep the feelings of her heart concealed. Lætitia, indeed, at this time, began to have full employment upon her hands. As her first design, when she left home, had been to throw herself in fortune's way, and to try, with every art in her power to draw in some man possesst of a good estate to marry her, she had been, notwithstanding her affair with Sir James, continually upon the *look out*. As she

could put on, when she pleased, a very specious appearance, she, one night, at Ranelagh, to which place she went with Lady Dursley, made herself taken notice of by a young gentleman just come of age.—Charlotte, after what had past, on Lætitia's account, would not have taken her any where, with her own consent, but she dared not to refuse her, whenever she was inclined to accompany her, as Sir James perpetually told her that she seemed to wish for nothing more than the ruin of a poor girl who, when once deserted by *her*—by whom she was once protected—would, of course, be humned by every body, and supposed to be guilty of the follies which had never entered into her head.

Thus hindered from getting rid of a loose, mercenary creature who had entirely

tirely gained Sir James on her side, and made him take a thorough dislike to *her*, Lady Dursley was obliged to submit patiently to every thing *he* thought proper, or come to an open breach with him which she could not bear to think of, not having, tho' he had unkindly preferred Miss Monkley to her, and even encouraged her to be impertinent to her, entirely weaned her heart from him. — She still felt some tenderness for him, and had, therefore, to give him pleasure, taken Lætitia to Ranelagh with her.

Lætitia met *that* evening with a young West Indian, possesst of a very large fortune. — The arts she used to engage his attention strongly attracted it, and she knew extremely well how to improve those arts when she found that they had

made the wished-for impresson. — Her new admirer was by no means agreeable in his person, or in his manners: he was tall, and awkward, with all the pride and hastiness to which many people brought up by the black women are liable. He was excessively eager upon every occasion, impatient of the least controul, of a very amorous constitution, and naturally disposed to be extravagantly, foolishly fond of an object capable, in his opinion, of contributing to his pleasure. In this light he beheld Miss Monkley, and knew not, at his first *recontre* with her, but that she was a woman of fortune, as Sir James, by his liberalities, enabled her to make a genteel appearance. Finding, however, upon enquiry, that she was only Lady Dursley's *companion*, he began to change his sentiments about her, and to think

think of having her without matrimony: Yet as he saw—tho' he saw little of her real temper—that she appeared determined to keep up the small dignity she had acquired from her person and her connections with Sir James's family, he perceived the necessity of being cautious, and of not discovering his inclination till he had secured her the conquest of which he reckoned upon, undisturbed with any doubts concerning it. He really thought he should be, if he was not already, in possession of it.

While this lively Creolian was laying plans in order to gain *his* point, Lætitia was working on her side, and trying, by every art she was mistress of, to carry *hers*, and to make the *fool*, as he appeared in *her* eyes, repair the injury

Sir

Sir James had done her: she did not, however, intend to break off entirely with him, as there was something in *his* person and behaviour which had pleased her from her first acquaintance with him: she believed, indeed, that if she could but once get married to *Norton*, she could very easily manage him, and mould him to her wishes, but the difficulty would be, she thought, to keep Sir James at a proper distance till the grand affair was accomplished.

Sir James had always been fond of Lætitia as a mistress: the licentiousness of *her* manners, exactly suited to his own, and he depended upon her firm attachment to him, not having had any reason to suppose himself deceived by her: but when he found that Norton came after her—whom she certainly in-

I

vited

vited to visit her, he grew extremely jealous, and uneasy: he reproached her with the fickleness of her temper, and swore that he should not see her at *his* house.

"I will see him somewhere else then," replied she, "for I will not be troubled. Do you think me so abandoned as to go off with the first fellow who comes in my way? No, Sir," continued she, "I never was so abandoned — I never had any reason to blame my own conduct till I was connected with you: I sincerely repent of that connection, and will never have any thing farther to do with you. I will leave your house immediately, if you desire it: I shall soon have a much better of my own."

"Indeed!"

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“Indeed!” said Sir James—“I fancy
“you reckon too fast, however—I shall
“therefore, let you remain here, tho’
“you have been not a little imperti-
“nent, because I may have farther bu-
“siness with you child,” added he, going
to take her in his arms.

“Hold, Sir—” replied she—stand off
this moment—“What can you mean
“by this behaviour? You certainly did
“not understand me, when I told you
“that I should be the wife of Mr. Nor-
“ton in a very short time: I will suffer
“no more such insolence: I have al-
“ready suffered too much.”

“Great suffering, indeed,” answered
Sir James, with an ironical tone—“If
“I remember right, you have received
“just

"just as much pleasure as you have
"given—You have had your penny-
"worth for your penny, child."

"Monstrous! unparalleled impudence,"
replied she, in a storm of anger—"How
"dare you treat me in this manner?"

"I treat you just as you ought to be
"treated."

This last speech drove her almost to distraction—Lætitia did not pretend to be angry when she was not; but then she was not always irascible—Sir James had often seen her inflamed against him, and had often softened her: but as she had now got another man in her head, and had a great share of ambition into the bargain, he found it impossible to make her listen to him—She ran from him to dress for her new lover, and left him
exceedingly

exceedingly provoked at her behaviour, exceedingly jealous of her also; to a degree indeed of which he had thought himself incapable.

Sir James, finding Lætitia so much elated with Norton's gallantry, began to think that he should have a great deal of trouble to keep her at all; to keep her to himself was, he imagined, quite out of the question. He resolved, however, not to give the affair absolutely over. He already told her that Norton should not come there, and she had partly declared she would then leave his house: he knew very well that if she *did* leave his house, he could have no sort of influence over her; that she would make a quarrel with him directly: he, therefore, thought it would be better to set Lady Dursley to look after her.

To

To Charlotte Sir James immediately went.

With more softness in his manner than she had lately been accustomed to, he thus addressed her — "I am afraid, my
" dear, that Lætitia is got into bad
" company: she has invited one Nor-
" ton to visit her—She takes a great li-
" berty, I think, by so doing—I wish
" you would not only express your dis-
" like to her behaviour, but tell her
" that he must not come here."

"I will do as you desire," replied she, after a moment's pause: "but I
" fancy, Sir James, she will mind you
" more than *me*."

"I do not know that," answered he;
"I had rather you would speak to her,
" it is more properly *your* province, as
" you

“ you may be supposed more hurt by
 “ such a proceeding than I am.”

Charlotte shook her head, but prepared to obey her husband.

Going to Miss Monkley's apartment, where she was adorning herself for the reception of her lover, she addressed herself to her in the following manner : —
 “ I am come, by Sir James's desire, to
 “ talk with you.”

Charlotte, not having been a long time in Lætitia's room, thought it necessary to give some reason for her appearance there; especially as it was not at all with her inclination : she was also willing to let Lætitia know that her coming was entirely at Sir James's request, and that *he* did not approve of her

her conduct. By so doing, Charlotte imagined that she should vex her, as she was quite ignorant of what had passed between them: but Lætitia soon convinced her that she was totally indifferent about any thing which either of them could say to her. However, she made no reply to Lady Dursley, which could be deemed impertinent: she only appeared to be entirely regardless of their approbation or censure.

After having returned a very slight answer, she began to talk upon opposite subjects.

Lady Dursley then rising, said, "Well, Miss Monkley, you will think upon what I have said, and oblige Sir James, by not receiving Mr. Norton."

Lætitia

Lætitia replied with a small motion of her head, and Lady Dursley left her, better satisfied with her than she had been for some time.

Having an engagement in the evening, Lady Dursley went out, giving herself no trouble about Miss Monkley, as she had, for some time past, declined going abroad with her.

Sir James, who had a mind to see if Lætitia paid any greater regard to his injunctions, than to his Lady's, staid at home, and would fain have kept the Lady to himself; but as she had before ordered the servant to shew Norton into another parlour when he came, she left Sir James to sit by himself, and very composedly walked into the next room

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to him, as soon as she heard him announced.

The Baronet was horridly provoked at this treatment, and determined to take another method, an infallible method—to make his rival decamp, and yet to preserve the Lady for his own use.

Sitting down immediately, he wrote an anonymous letter to Mr. Norton. In that letter he told him that Lætitia had been for some time his mistress; that he was not yet tired of her; but that he might have her as often as he pleased, when he was weary of his connection with her.

This letter he dispatched by a porter to his rival the next day.

Norton

Norton was not in the least displeased with the contents, as they prevented him from giving up his liberty to a woman who was, he now believed, unworthy of an alliance with him. — “What
 “ a fortunate piece of paper is this,”
 said he, running it over again : “ had it
 “ not arrived so seasonably, I should
 “ most certainly have married her.”

Happy in his escape, and not so violently enamoured as she had believed him to be, he thought he could wait with tolerable patience till her first lover had done with her. However, that she might not frame a false accusation against him, and charge him with a desertion through caprice, he informed her, in a note, that she was quite mistaken in him, if she imagined he had the slightest intention to marry a woman
 who

who was already the mistress of another man: adding, that when she was weary of her *lover*, or when *he* was tired of *her*, nothing would be more agreeable to him than a temporary connection with her.

It is not easy, it is impossible, indeed, to describe the rage and disappointment which Lætitia felt on seeing herself thus detected, and exposed to the contempt of the very man whom she thought so compleat a dupe. She accused Sir James, Lady Dursley—all the world, of having betrayed her. She could not tell exactly *who* had made the unlucky discovery; who had given Norton such a piece of intelligence; but she fixed it upon Sir James.

The first time Sir James saw Lætitia after this capital disappointment, he saw her in tears.

As soon as he appeared before her, she flew at him, and, in the bitterest terms, reproached him for having not only ruined her himself, but for having done every thing in his power to hinder her from repairing the mischief he had brought upon her; by giving intelligence to the man who would have provided for her, sufficient to deter him from thinking of her in an honourable way.

Sir James bore the first onset very patiently. When she had vented a little the tempest in her bosom, he began to try to sooth her; assuring her that he did not deserve the injury she had done him, by leaving him for another; nor
the

the reproaches with which she had loaded him, for the prevention of a marriage which never could have taken place, as her behaviour was far too unguarded for any man to imagine her fit for a wife: adding, that her behaviour had ever exposed her to what she called insolence, though she might prefer it herself to a more corrected one: and that, if she would be content with him, who had always liked her better than any other woman in the world, he would promise to provide for her; even to support her in a manner with which she could have no reason to be dissatisfied.

Lætitia, thinking that the *promise* at the conclusion of Sir James's last speech, though greatly beneath her expectations, was not quite to be disregarded, listened to it.—She fancied that she might make

something of it, and that the provision
 recommended to her consideration would,
 at least, be more eligible than none at
 all: she had several reasons too for secur-
 ing a support: she, therefore, judged it
 proper to cool by degrees.—“ If you
 “ will settle five hundred a year upon
 “ me, Sir James,” replied she, “ I will
 “ say no more upon a subject which
 “ gives me the most torturing disquiet,
 “ though I can never cease to regret the
 “ having occasion to make such a de-
 “ mand: a demand, however, scanda-
 “ lously trifling, when placed in oppo-
 “ sition to the loss of honour and peace.
 “ —The most advantageous settlement,
 “ indeed, you can possibly offer, would
 “ never recompense me for what I have
 “ already suffered; for what I am yet to
 “ suffer from your behaviour to me.”

Here

Here she was interrupted by a stream of well-dissembled tears.

Sir James, during the flow of those tears, sat looking at her with a mixture of contempt and desire, muttering, at the same time, between his teeth, "What a despicable creature is a w—re!" Presently afterwards, slightly apologizing for his departure, he left her, without letting her know whether he would come to any determination.

The truth is, Sir James could not, by any means, bear to part with Lætitia; he could less bear, however, to think of settling such a sum upon a mercenary wretch, who had really, without being violently persuaded, yielded to his wishes, and who had been almost as

ready to seduce *him*, as he was to amuse himself with *her*.

Lætitia, who had an infinite deal of penetration upon some occasions, saw that the settlement proposed by her was not in the least relished by Sir James; she, therefore, resolved to try if she could not get as good a one from Norton; naturally enough imagining, that a man would be more ready to pay for his pleasure before he received it, than when he was satiated with it: but as this was a very nice business, and required some management, she thought it best to take time to consider of it, and to make her new admirer still more eager by delay.

While she was ruminating upon the means the most likely to facilitate the accomplishment of her designs, Sir James,

James, who resolved to keep her without paying so extravagant a price for her, went again to his wife.

"I am now sure," said he to Charlotte, "that Lætitia carries on a scandalous affair with that fellow; and I insist upon your writing to Mrs. Monkley, and desiring her to send for her daughter home."

A letter from Charlotte would, he thought, oblige Mrs. Monkley to send her daughter a peremptory recall; he thought too that Lætitia, in her condition, would never comply with the summons; and he hoped, in consequence of that condition, to take her entirely under his own protection, upon much more reasonable terms than she had proposed.

Lady Dursley a second time obeyed her husband.

Mrs. Monkley, in answer, wrote a very severe letter to her daughter, and reproached her in the warmest terms for her indiscretion.

Lætitia was now absolutely furious: she upbraided Sir James in the keenest language, for having not only destroyed her reputation and her peace, himself, but for having deprived her of the only remaining comfort she had left, her mother's love.

Hurt by her passionate complaints, which were truly affecting, Sir James swore he had not written a single line to Mrs. Monkley: to clear himself entirely of what had, he found, strongly preju-
diced

diced her against him ; and, to recover her good opinion, he laid all the blame on his wife : adding, that there was no trusting a woman who believed herself virtuous with the character of another, as she always took a malicious pleasure in tearing it to pieces : nay, he carried his concern for Lætitia—who fell into fits—so far, that he actually went to Lady Dursley, and reproached *her* for having done only what he had desired her : telling her, that, having a cursed cold constitution herself, she could form no idea of the feelings of an honest, open-hearted girl, who would give her person as freely as her purse to the first man who saw it, and sighed for it ; and that she was incapable of pitying the sufferings which such a generous conduct would sometimes bring upon her.

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Charlotte blushed like a new-blown rose, at being thus severely, thus indelicately condemned, for having acted entirely in obedience to the requests of her husband. She felt indignation and contempt rise in her breast: tears of resentment filled her eyes: sighs of repentance for having married a man of such a disposition, swelled her bosom.

Soon after Sir James had left her in this situation, strictly charging her not to trouble herself either about Mrs. Monkley or her daughter, Fawley came in.

Very much shocked to see her almost overwhelmed by distress, he asked her, in the most affectionate accents, what had occasioned it.

Happy,

Happy, in the midst of her distress, to find so sincere a friend, she told him, in as few words as possible, how unkindly Sir James had behaved to her; assuring him that her situation was now become so totally disagreeable, so much to be deplored, indeed, that she scarce knew how to bear it any longer. — “ I am sensible, Mr. Fawley,” continued she, growing a little more composed, by having opened her heart to a man who, she plainly perceived, sincerely sympathized with her, but who had a sufficient share of delicacy to prevent him from abusing her confidence — “ I am thoroughly sensible that I should not, on any account, have married a man who had dared to attempt unwarrantable freedoms while he was making his addresses to me. I should not have ventured myself with a man of cor-

“rupt principles : with a licentious
 “man no woman is safe : and she who
 “imagines herself capable of reclaiming
 “a husband whose morals are loose, by
 “the rectitude of her own conduct, will
 “find herself, like me, unfortunately
 “deceived. A man, destitute of honour,
 “cannot make a virtuous woman —
 “nor even a vicious woman—happy.”

Fawley was charmed with the delivery
 of these excellent sentiments ; he was
 grieved, however, to see her endure so
 much from them : his pity and his love,
 both, increased ; yet he still concealed
 the latter, that she might not be offended
 with the indulgence of it, pure as it was.
 He loved, indeed, so truly, that he was
 quite regardless of *himself* ; he wished
 only to administer relief to *her* : this wish
 was strongly painted in his countenance,

and it was so warmly expressed by his every word and action, that she felt an instantaneous ease: she felt, as if a heavy load was thrown off her spirits: the longer she conversed with him, the lighter she felt. Yet, as she also felt her love for him hourly gaining ground, she became almost afraid of trusting herself alone with him: and she seldom could see him but alone, as Lætitia never desired to come in her way, except there was any company which, she thought, would either divert her, or be of service to her.

Lætitia, indeed, was, at this time, so eager to throw herself in Norton's way, in hopes of bringing him to offer better terms than Sir James's, that Charlotte rarely saw her: she never *wished* to see her at all; but she would have been glad
of

of a real friend always near her, as a check upon her conduct; being fearful of committing improprieties in consequence of her regard for Fawley, and of the tenderness which he, visibly, discovered for her. She was, indeed, sometimes put to a severe trial to hide sensations which, while they gave her pleasure, she could not help blaming, and which she dared not to encourage. Often did she wish for Mrs. Fielding's society; often did she recollect, with sighs, the happy hours, the happy days, she spent with her Olivia, alike ignorant of the pains and pleasures of love: at no time so delighted as when she was talking of *her* to Burleigh, who frequently called upon her for that purpose, not being acquainted with any other person to whom he could speak about her with so much freedom. She checked him, however,

ever, now and then, on his expressing his sentiments in terms which were in her opinion too rapturous. When he was running on, one afternoon, in that strain, she stopped him — “ Hold, Mr. Burleigh: consider that she is married ” — “ Ay, Madam,” Burleigh replied, “ you need not put me in mind of *that*: I do but consider her marriage too much for my peace; and I am greatly mistaken if my friend Fawley does not suffer as much from the same sort of reflections with regard to your Ladyship.”

“ I hope, at least,” replied she, blushing, “ that you go no farther than a surmise; the man who ventures to declare his passion for the wife of another, forfeits all pretensions to her esteem.”

“ These

“ These are very refined sentiments,
 “ indeed,” said Burleigh; “ few women
 “ carry their delicacy so far as your La-
 “ dyship does.”

“ Had I but always thought as I do
 “ now, Mr. Burleigh,” answered she,
 with a sigh, “ or acted agreeably to my
 “ first principles, I might now have
 “ been happy : too late am I convinced
 “ that the felicity of our sex, in a con-
 “ nection with yours, depends entirely
 “ upon the character and conduct of
 “ the man : if *they* will stand a ser-
 “ tiny, we may be happy, though every
 “ other requisite is wanting : if *they* are
 “ not defensible, person, fortune, and ac-
 “ complishments are poor recommenda-
 “ tions : such advantages, indeed, only
 “ serve to heighten our regret for having
 “ be-

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"bestowed our hand and heart on a
"man unworthy of them."

While they were engaged in this conversation, Sir James and Lætitia were both abroad. Just at the close of Charlotte's last speech, a servant brought her a letter sealed with black wax.

She started immediately — "A letter
"from Mrs. Fielding!"

Burleigh exclaimed, with a tremor from head to foot, "Open it, my dear
"Mrs. Fielding. — Who is dead?"

Having hurried her eye over the few first lines, she turned to him, who was actually pale, and violently fluttered —

"Compose yourself, Mr. Burleigh," said

she:

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she — "need I say any more than that
" my dear Olivia is restored to me?"

"Is she dead?" cried he, ea-
gently: "is she freed?"

"She is dead," replied Charlotte:
"she is very much afflicted, however;
" and you can hope for nothing but
" from time."

"Oh! that is enough," said he, ex-
cessively moved: "that is sufficient."
"I will be patient," he said, "I will be
" my wishes, I will be patient, I will be
" period of my life, could I then
" be granted, I would be patient. But
" will you not, my dear Lady Darnley,
" lend me, I beg, your favour with a bear-
" ing of the letter? Will you not per-
" mit

"mit me just to look at it? one peep?"
"She is not now, thank heaven! the
"wife of another—I may now give
"the most unlimited indulgence to the
"ardent passion which has so long
"taken possession of my soul: it will
"be no longer criminal; it will become
"ritorious indeed, to adore her. How
"I exult at the rapturous idea!"

During the delivery of these exclamations, he made several attempts to get Olivia's letter into his own hands: but Lady Dursley held it out of his reach, telling him to be quiet — "I will not
"expose the secrets of my friend," said she.

"Nay then," replied he, briskly, "I
"am certainly mentioned in it; and
"can you be so barbarous as to refuse
"me

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"me a sight of my own name, written
"by that dear hand?"

"You would not see it, indeed you
"would not, were you to read the
"whole letter — I wonder how you can
"expect to see it. — Besides, you could
"not surely like a woman indelicate
"enough to think of her lover, at a
"time when her husband lies unburied.
"Eve, Mr. Burleigh! I thought you
"had known, and loved my friend
"better."

"I hope to know a great deal more of
"her, but I am sure I cannot possibly
"love her more than I do: — but you
"are too calm, too composed, to have
"any idea of the passion which I at
"this moment feel, and which is the
"support of my life. Should she, now

"she

" she is at liberty, be indifferent to me;
" should I not, now she is free, find in
" her the warmest affection for me, I
" shall be distracted."

" Patience, Mr. Burleigh," said Charlotte, smiling at his eagerness and agitation — " patience does wonders."

" My dear Lady Dursley," replied he,
" you have never loved—indeed you
" have not."

" I once thought I did," answered she, blushing; " and most sincerely
" too—but we will not talk of that now."

" I can talk of nothing but the generous, the excellent Olivia," said he; " and since you will not indulge me
" with a sight of her letter, grant me,
" at

" at least, the request I am going to
 " make : condescend to mention me in
 " your answer to Mrs. Fielding : tell her
 " how ardently, how truly, I doat on
 " her : tell her that, if I did not tremble
 " at the thoughts of offending her, I
 " would this instant throw myself, and
 " every thing belonging to me, at her
 " feet. Yet hold," added he, interrupting
 " himself, " what ruffiness ! she may be, at
 " present, so far superior to me in point
 " of fortune, as to make it presumptuous in me to think of her. Well
 " then, Lady Dursley," continued he,
 " after a pause — " say nothing of me — I
 " am sensible that I cannot pretend to
 " the widow of Mr. Fielding — I had
 " forgot — were she still Miss Thornton,
 " how gladly could I offer my little
 " all ! "

He

He then took his hat to go. But
 "may I not," said he, turning back,
 "solicit her acquaintance—her friend-
 "ship?—May I not beg to be ad-
 "mitted when she receives company?
 "I need not, surely, be estranged,
 "though I may not hope to be affine-
 "guished."

The sudden entrance of Fawcett pre-
 vented Charlotte from returning any
 other answer than a smile.

"My dear Charles," cried Burleigh,
 flying to Fawcett, "Fielding is dead:
 "my Olivia—yes; she will ever be my
 "Olivia, in my opinion, though in an-
 "other sense—is free to choose a man
 "more suitable to her years, and to her
 "taste. Who that happy mortal will
 "be, time, and she herself, only can
 "de-

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"Harkee, Charles," said Burleigh to him, in a whisper, "agitated as I am, you would be very glad to see a certain Lady," looking hard at Lady Dursley, "in Mrs. Fielding's situation."

"Hush! get away, you rogue," cried Fawcley, and hurried him out of the room.

When he returned to Charlotte, he examined her carefully, apprehensive of her having overheard Burleigh, and of her being disconcerted by what he whispered to him. He approached her indeed with so much submission and timidity, and discovered so much respectfulness in his countenance, that she thought she never saw him look so perfectly amiable, so deserving of her sincere esteem: her features made immediate discoveries

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extremely in his favour: there appeared such a sweetness, such a satisfaction in them, that he was lost in the contemplation of a face, which he could not help loving and admiring at the same time. C

A conversation soon followed between them concerning Mrs. Fielding, of whom Charlotte spoke in the highest terms; and particularly commended that part of her conduct which related to Burleigh.

Fawley, when he was informed of her uncommon discretion, joined his praises to her friend's; and declaring also, that he did not know a situation more difficult to support, than that in which Mrs. Fielding was engaged. "It is the hardest task in the world to be so deeply affected by the tender passion,

and to conduct ourselves with prudence under the dominion of it."

"And yet," replied Charlotte, "the one cannot merit a reward without the other. It is to prudence that we owe all our happiness, as *that* alone marks out to us the bounds which we ought never to pass: bounds which we cannot pass, without putting it into the power of repentance to give us considerable disquiet."

"But we are not always happy, though ever so prudent," answered he, with a languishing tenderness in his eyes.

"We shall be still more unhappy," replied she, blushing, "if we act in opposition to reason and discretion. Let

“us, however, change this subject,
“Mr. Fawley.”

Charlotte, indeed, was afraid he should drop something of which she could not entirely approve, but which she should not have the power to condemn; not in the terms, at least, it merited in her opinion; and, therefore, chose to give a turn to the conversation.

Fawley could not but secretly applaud her discretion: he was charmed, at the same time, to find that she totally blamed herself for having married Sir James. She never mentioned her marriage with him, however, but when she could not well suppress her sentiments about it; and then only in an oblique manner.

While

While Fawley and Lady Dursley were thus rising in each other's esteem, Lætitia was making use of all her arts to draw in Norton to answer her extravagant demands: but as she found it no easy matter to meet with him, there being many places to which she could not go without Lady Dursley, who had, of late, declined asking her to be of her parties, she wrote a card to him, and invited him to an interview with her in one of the green boxes.

Norton, not being able to refuse so fair a challenge, met her at the place and time appointed. There, in consequence of such an invitation, he imagined himself sufficiently authorized to take what liberties he pleased. The Lady, however, soon let him know her price, and gave him to understand,

that, without a settlement of five hundred a year, he must expect no farther favours from her.

The favours which Norton had already received from Lætitia whetted his appetite, and made him extremely desirous of supplemental ones: but he thought that her terms were too high. He told her so plainly: he told her that there were too many fine women in *her* way, for her to expect a compliance with so large a demand: that the market was overstocked; and that, when a man could have a handsome girl, a different girl, every night, for a couple of guineas, he would be a cursed fool to part with such a sum, to have only the same object over and over again: adding, that such a bargain was as bad, if not worse, than matrimony. — “For
“ that

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"that I can have a new figure
"whenever I am in the humour."

"For that very reason," replied she,

"because all men are so confoundedly

"fond of variety, it is absolutely ne-

"cessary for us to secure a competency:

"we should otherwise be thrown off

"the moment a new girl comes in your

"way: every new girl must yield to a

"still newer one, and so on, to the end

"of the chapter."

"You call five hundred a year, then,

"a more competency? a sum just

"enough to supply you with the ne-

"cessaries of life? Upon my word,

"you have made a very modest de-

"mand; but as neither my fortune,

"nor my inclination, will permit me

"to comply with it, you must lower

"your

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"your expectations pretty considerably,
" before I can think of you. I would, in-
" deed, at this very moment, give up all
" thoughts of you, if there was not
" something about you still more plea-
" sing than beauty, and more striking
" than wit; something, in short, which
" touched my fancy: but, as I may
" meet with women as suitable to my
" taste, and less extorting, I shall not
" set give myself any more trouble about
" you, Madam."

With these words he left the box, and
left the lady to her own reflections.

Her reflections on Mr. Norton's
departure were by no means agreeable:
aggravated by heat, and by the heat of
the hour, greatly agitated too by a
strong desire to appear in an inviting at-
titude

titude to a young man of quality in the same box, she fell into a kind of fainting fit.

That fit brought my Lord to her assistance. Raw and unexperienced, just come upon the town, a mere novice in these affairs, he was excessively charmed with her; especially when she, with a shower of counterfeited tears, complained heavily of the neglect of the man who had been with her; attributing the disorder in which she appeared, to *his* desertion of her on another woman's account.

My Lord made a number of fine speeches in return, and begged she would permit him to take her under his protection, and to wait on her home, as he had a carriage ready.

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After a little, affected reluctance, Lætitia consented to accept of his Lordship's offer; but finding herself better, she was easily persuaded to sit the play out; and during the performance of it seized an opportunity to inform him, that she was quite ashamed to see herself, without a female companion, at a public place, with a man too entirely a stranger to her.—“ I never was in such a situation before,” added she; “ nor should I have been so circumstanced now, had I not, being under solemn engagements to the person who quitted me in so cruel a manner, looked upon him as a husband.”

My Lord said every thing which would afford her, he thought, the least consolation; really believing, that she had told him nothing but the truth: and

she

he so kindly received all his intended reparations for the injury Norton had done her, that they were upon an exceeding good footing before the coach stopped at Sir James's door. When his Lordship handed her out of the coach, he begged her permission to wait upon her into the house; but she, recollecting that Sir James, by coming to the knowledge of Norton's visits, had occasioned the loss of him, told her, that she was under the care of a Lady uncommonly rigid, that her austerity prevented her from receiving him there; but that she could not deny herself the pleasure of his company in any other place.

These preliminaries being adjusted, they parted: the Gentleman, over her hand

180 'T WAS WISE NO TO MARRY HIM.

and ears in love; the Lady, in high hopes of turning his passion for her to a truly good account; and she, who had been long a prisoner to the coach, now felt the air of freedom.

Lætitia, the next morning, felt her spirits still more agreeably agitated. She received a tender note from his Lordship, in which he intreated her to meet him at the opera. She joyfully assented to that request, as soon as she read it; but not daring to ask Lady Dursley to accompany her, she was reduced to the necessity of going by herself; and, consequently, of appearing in a bad light, or of taking a very shabby companion—the milliner's girl where she bought her things.

This girl was soon recognized by the most part of the audience: her face, indeed, was as well known; as the ribbons. I bands.

bands of the shop in which she worked. The alarm was soon given; and, before the opera was half over, my Lord had the mortification to hear a thousand jokes and witticisms thrown out upon the women whom he had pitched upon for the amusement of the evening.

Young, naturally impetuous, and quickly susceptible of an affront, my Lord soon grew warm in the defence of his *Dulcinea*, but was in a very little time *borridly let down*, when the knowing ones of his acquaintance told him that she was not a woman of character.

Hurt by this intelligence, which he soon found to be authentic, for he really liked his new mistress, he looked extremely foolish. However, though he would have been justly ashamed of such

a wo-]

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a woman for a wife, he did not think he should be in the least scandalized by taking her into keeping: but he was advised not to be in a hurry even about that mode of proceeding, as she was the most exorbitant in her demands of any girl about town.—He, therefore, began to treat her with rather more freedom than he had hitherto behaved to her.

While Lætitia was taking all the steps in her power to bring his Lordship back to his first respectful behaviour, Burleigh, who had waited with all possible patience for the funeral of Mr. Fielding, ventured to write to the widow, without making, however, the smallest declaration of his passion for her. He only intreated her to permit *him*, when her doors were open to her other friends, to pay his respects to her; as nobody could

'T WAS WRONG TO MARRY HIM. 183

could more sincerely esteem her than he had done, even before she had laid him under obligations never to be cancelled by contributing to the preservation of his life, a life which had long been wholly in *her* power.

Mrs. Fielding, charmed with Burleigh's respectful tenderness, and transported to find that she was in a situation to reward his love, as Mr. Fielding had left her a very ample fortune, answered his letter immediately. In an immediate answer she, with all the honest frankness of undissembled affection, plainly informed him that she should always be glad to see him; adding, that if it was in *her* power to do any thing towards the happiness of a life which he did her the honour to say she had preserved, he might freely command her.

It

It would be very difficult to describe Burleigh's raptures on the receipt of so animating a letter from the long-admired, long-adored mistress of his heart.

With this animating letter he flew to Lady Dursley; and pressed it with such ecstacy to his bosom, that she could not help smiling at him, though a sigh escaped *her*, on her considering how much happier Olivia was than she was ever likely to be. — She almost hated herself too, at the same time, for envying her friend.

Burleigh told her, that he came to express, if possible, the transport which he felt at Mrs. Fielding's conduct, which had ever been to him, and to every body else, irreproachable; and to know if her Ladyship had any commands to her.

as he was going to accept of her very desirable invitation immediately.

Charlotte told him that she would trouble him—if he pleased—with a letter to her friend.

In that letter she conveyed a full account of Burleigh's behaviour, which could not, she was sure, but be highly agreeable to Olivia, and make his reception doubly delightful to him.

Burleigh was received by Mrs. Fielding in a manner the most flattering to be imagined. He had, indeed, no bar to his hopes, but that which delicacy placed in opposition to them. — He thought himself greatly obliged to Olivia; and, in his first conversation with her, dropped some hints with regard to the superiority

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riority of her fortune, which made her smile.

She smiled, and told him that fortune, if not shared with those preferred by us to all the world, could give no real happiness: adding, that, if he would be obliging enough to grant her ~~her~~ requests, she would not, she promised him, refuse any of his in return.

Burleigh, in the most violent agitation of spirits, with trembling limbs, and a faltering voice, replied, — “You may depend, Madam, upon my strict obedience to your wishes, whatever it may cost me.”

“Give me your word then,” said she, with an affectionate smile, “give me your word and honour, not to ask me
“ to

"to be yours, till I have paid every
"kind of respect due to the memo-
"ry of Mr. Fielding, who deserved
"a much better wife than it was in my
"power to make him: grant me this
"request, and I will assent to any thing
"which can in the least prove instru-
"mental to your felicity."

Burleigh stood a moment looking at
her with silent rapture: he then, seizing
her hand, was going to press it to his
lips; but he instantaneously checked
himself — "Perhaps this is too much,"
cried he, letting her hand drop: "yet,
"by h——n! I cannot describe my
"feelings as I ought, nor thank you in
"any other manner at present."

No.

"No matter," said she: — "this
 "proof of your exact compliance with
 "what I have demanded of you is suf-
 "cient: — I now dare to trust you, Bur-
 "leigh, and, I think, I can trust myself, or
 "I should ill deserve the fortune which
 "Mr. Fielding has left me: a fortune
 "which I desire only to employ in con-
 "tributing towards the happiness of the
 "man whom I have so much reason to
 "esteem."

The entrance of company prevented
 Burleigh from uttering a reply, but he
 looked a very significant one, with a pair
 of the most expressive eyes conceivable.
 His significant glances gave the fair
 widow entire satisfaction.

Mrs. Fielding was as happy, as she
 expected to be till her mourning was
 over. She spent her time chiefly among
 her

her friends; and among *them*, Burleigh, who had taken an apartment at the next village, frequently appeared. Yet, though she loved him with the most impassioned tenderness, Olivia seldom or never saw her lover alone. Her first business, when she had a little recovered her spirits, was to return the civilities she had received from Mrs. Monkley, by making a very genteel addition to her scanty income, and by endeavouring to console her for the follies of Lætitia, who seemed to be irreclaimable: she earnestly persuaded her aunt, however, to insist upon her coming home.

During these transactions in the country, Lætitia made so considerable a progress in her *noble lover's* affections, that he found himself scarce able to deny her
any

any thing: he began, indeed, to think of marrying with less repugnance than he had felt since she exhibited herself with him at the opera. They continued to meet at different places, and nothing but an apprehension of losing all hopes of making her fortune, prevented her from yielding to him.

Sir James now began to miss Lætitia, as he saw less of her than ever: he had heard also a flying report of her new connection with a young nobleman. Taking the first opportunity to tax her with *that* connection, he told her, at the same time, that she was a fickle little toad, and that he would, positively, confine her to himself.

"Indeed but you will not," replied she; "for I will be confined only to the man whom I marry."

"You

"You will never be confined at all, then, child," said he: — "all hopes of your marrying Miss Letty, are pretty well over, I believe."

"If they are," answered she, tossing her head, "I have no body to thank for the disappointment, I fancy, but *you*, Sir James: I am not, however, quite so sure as *you* seem to be, that I shall never be married. I have, on the contrary, the greatest expectation, at present, of being very brilliantly married. No thanks to *you*, Sir — I shall keep *you* at a proper distance when *that day* arrives."

"Whenever that day *does* arrive," replied he, "I will promise, I will swear, to give you up; but, till the arrival of that long-wished for, though never
"to

"to be expected day, my dear," continued he, catching her in his arms, "we
"will be as close friends as ever."

"Stand off, Sir," answered she, struggling; "let me go: I will not be held:
"I will not be undone again."

"No, no," said he, still striving to detain her; "you cannot be undone
"more than you *have been* already—
"So—"

—"I swear then," cried she, "if you
"will not quit your hold, I will alarm
"the house: I will raise heaven and
"earth, before I will be treated in this
"manner—Help!"

Sir James, clapping his hand upon
her mouth, began to mimick her.—

"Now,

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**"Now, Madam, let us hear who makes
"the most noise, you or I."**

Just at that instant a thundering rap
at the door startled them both, and ob-
liged Sir James to release his pretty pri-
soner.

The servant announced Lord Bostock.

When Lord Bostock entered the
room, Lætitia was not quite ready to
see him: she put herself into order, how-
ever, as well as she could, and received
his Lordship in the most obliging man-
ner; telling him, that she looked upon
his calling on her at home as a very par-
ticular favour.

**"To myself, dear Miss Monkley, it
"is, indeed," said my Lord, "and I
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" attempted to obtain it at the com-
 " mencement of our acquaintance, when
 " you seemed to apprehend an impro-
 " priety in my visiting you : and I now
 " do myself the pleasure of waiting
 " on you here, in spite of your appre-
 " hensions, because I have, with the
 " greatest difficulty, met with you a-
 " broad as often as I wished; and be-
 " cause I cannot possibly live without
 " seeing you. Now, if my calling upon
 " you here be disagreeable, Madam,"
 continued he, " you will make me ex-
 " tremely happy, by fixing some other
 " place for our interviews."

Lætitia, transported at his behaviour,
 and particularly flattered by the respect
 he paid her, which she looked upon as
 the surest signs of the fairness of his in-
 tentions with regard to *her*, returned a
 very

very kind answer; every word of which, as well as every word of my Lord's address to her, Sir James heard from an adjoining apartment, into which he slipped before his Lordship's entrance.

Thoroughly provoked at the conversation, from which he actually believed he was on the point of losing Lætitia, Sir James hurried up into Lady Dursley's dressing-room, and told her, that Monkley was grown a very good-for-nothing little hussy; that she had got another fellow with her; and that he insisted upon her sending for the girl up, in order to forbid her ever receiving him again.

Charlotte, who was now quite weary of talking to Lætitia, as she found it was to no purpose at all, replied, that

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she thought such a particular prohibition would come much better from *him* than from *her*, as she had long lost the little influence she once had over her.

Sir James, nettled at this answer, and not having been in a good humour before, replied, in a surly tone, that, whether she had any influence or not over her, it was no matter — “I expect
“you,” continued he, in the same tone,
“to do as I desire you. If the girl is
“suffered to have all sorts of fellows
“come after her, I am sure her mother
“will think you take very little care
“of her.”

“It is not in *my* power to take care
“of her, Sir James,” said Charlotte:
“she will not mind any thing *I* say.”

“Well

"Well then," answered he, pretty loudly, "send her home: tell her at once, that, if she will encourage men to come after her, she must leave your house—tell her so instantly, I say; for *"I will have it done."*

With these words, fiercely delivered, he flung out of the room.

Lady Dursley, somewhat disconcerted by the rudeness of her husband's behaviour, determined, however, to obey him, though she expected to be insulted by Lætitia.

Accordingly, when my Lord took his leave—not in a hurry—and when Lætitia, charmed with all the fine things he had said to her, still more charmed with the easiness which he dis-

covered to be led which way she pleased, was going up stairs, singing, with her heart as light as her heels, Lady Dursley opened her dressing-room door, and said — “Miss Monkley, neither Sir James nor I approve of your receiving gentlemen in *our* house: we desire you, therefore, to tell them not to come here: if they do, they will not be admitted.”

“I shall not stay any where,” replied Lætitia, perty, “where I may not receive what company I please.”

“You may go then *as soon as* you please: nobody here, I believe, will offer to detain you.”

“Not your Ladyship,” replied she, with an insolent air; “but that’s no mat-

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" matter. I shall quit a house which
" has long been very disagreeable to me.
" —I am sure I wish I had never
" seen it."

" You might have quitted it long
" ago," answered Charlotte; " nobody
" would have hindered you."

" That is more than you can tell,
" Madam—but nobody has a right to
" controul me at present, except my
" mother; and, as I am of age—the
" I have, for these three years past, been
" only called *eighteen*—I am pretty cer-
" tain that *she* cannot oblige me to do
" any thing I don't like.—I shall not
" put her to the trial, indeed, for I
" do not intend to go near her."

Lady Dursley, shocked at her behaviour, and truly concerned to see a young creature, who had been so well educated, run headlong to her ruin, endeavoured to reason with her, and to prevail on her not to throw herself entirely out of the protection of those who would still be her friends, in spite of her indiscretions, if she would let them: but she defeated all her good intentions, by declaring that she wanted no friends but her present ones, who had shewn their sincere attachment to her by their behaviour; a behaviour which was the strongest proof of their regard.—“ I desire no other.”

As soon as she had uttered the few last words, she flounced away. Sir James, having heard part of what she had been saying, came into his wife's dressing-

ding-room, and told her, that she had not been half sharp enough with her.

Lætitia, indeed, before she met with Lady Dursley, had not designed to leave the house till she was quite sure of an eligible asylum somewhere; but after what she had said to her, she determined to remove herself, and to make her Ladyship's behaviour to her a pretence for her removal: by that plea she hoped to render her own character less suspicious: she, therefore, artfully threw herself in Sir James's way; and appearing to wipe her eyes, said, "I am going, this instant, to leave a place which is become detestable to me: I will not bear any farther insults from 'Lady Dursley upon any consideration: I will order a coach to be fetched directly."

How

K 5

Sir

Sir James, who could not endure the thoughts of parting with her, notwithstanding all he had said to Charlotte about her, and who was actually weak enough to be touched by her affected tears, took her in his arms, and begged her to pardon all that was past, for his sake, as he could not live without her.

"I will not stay a moment longer," replied she, "if Lady Dursley talks to me in the manner she has just done."

"She shall not talk to you at all," answered he: "I will silence her for ever, if you will stay, and receive no more visits from Lord Bostock. See him no more," added he, "and I will consent to any thing."

"Well,

"Well, well," cried she, "let me go now — but I will promise nothing—"

"You shall have every thing you like—my wife shall be quite submissive to you : only get rid of Lord Bostock : let me not see *him*—let me not hear of *him* again."

She made no reply, but nodded her head at him—while she broke from him—She then went up stairs to think of the best way she could take to secure Lord Bostock, whom she had promised to meet that night at a masqued ball : determining to say and do every thing in her power to keep up his passion, and to refuse the gratification of it, when she saw it at its height, till he procured a licence, and married her.

With this resolution, and with these views, she sat down to her toilette; and while she waited for her hair-dresser, considered how she should look, and what she should say, in order to fix his Lordship.

While Lætitia was so employed, Sir James went and reproved Charlotte very smartly, for having said so many severe things to her.

Charlotte told him, in reply, with the greatest mildness, that she had only acted in obedience to his commands.

"'Tis a d—d lie," answered he, furiously; "I never bade you to insult her, nor to treat her with that confounded pride, with which you have always behaved to her. It is the
curled

“ cursed reserve, the ill humour with
“ which you have always treated her,
“ that has made the girl detest you :
“ and no wonder she should be glad of
“ any company rather than yours.”

Poor Charlotte again bore the storm which Lætitia had raised by her insolence and folly, with patience, and only answered Sir James by her tears.

In tears he left her, after having repeatedly charged her to treat Lætitia with the greatest consideration and respect : then, going to his own dressing-room, he sent for his favourite servant, and asked him if he knew how long Lord Bostock had been acquainted with Miss Monkley ; if he knew where she was, and what she was doing.

William,

William, who found that all the intelligence he could procure about them would be acceptable to his master, told him that he knew nothing of Lord Bostock till he saw him come there, but that he had some knowledge of his *Gentleman*, and would get all the information he could from *him*.

Away hurried William.

Returning in about a couple of hours, he informed Sir James, that Lord Bostock was to be at the masqued ball that evening to meet Miss Monkley: that *his* dress was a blue domino with a white hat and feather; and that the Lady's was to be that of a nose-gay girl.

Sir James having rewarded his servant for his intelligence, ordered him to procure

cure a dress exactly like Lord Bostock's. That dress was accordingly procured: he made his first appearance, however, in black, that he might, unobserved, find out the designs of those of whom he was in search. As soon as he had discovered their plan of operation, he retired to a house in the neighbourhood, new-dressed himself, and returned to the company. A friend of his, who waited at that house for him, then put on *his domino*, and attended him.

Sir James, finding Lord Bostock separated, at length, from Lætitia, by his friend's vigilance and address, advanced to the latter, and telling her it was time to go, hurried her into a chair, ordering it to a bagnio.

Lætitia

Lætitia made no resistance, really imagining that Lord Bostock was her companion, and supposing that she was going to be carried to his lodgings, she considered, during her ride, what methods she should take to inflame her lover's passion for her, and to spur him to marry her.

When she was set down at the door of a house with which she was quite unacquainted, and conducted up stairs by a mask in the dress which her admirer had worn during the evening, another figure exactly in the same dress entered the room, and asked him fiercely what he did with that Lady.

"I do with her what I please," replied Sir James, "and will not be troubled with any impertinent questions, nor
inter-

"interrupted by any man: leave us,
"therefore, instantly."

"I will not stir without the Lady,"
said Lord Bostock, "whom I have a
"right to protect as she put herself un-
"der *my* care."

"I have a prior right to defend her
"from your insults," replied Sir James,
"being intrusted with her by her mo-
"ther."

"Good heaven!" cried Lætitia,
trembling with astonishment and fear,
"what can all this mean? Which of
"you is Lord Bostock? He is the per-
"son I am to go with."

"I will perish before you shall go
"with *him*," said Sir James, pulling
off

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off his mask, seizing her, at the same time, he, with the assistance of the above-mentioned friend, who had followed him, forced her into another room.

Lord Bostock, being left by himself, foamed with rage, and vowed revenge, not only against Sir James, but against the house, against all who were in it. Hurrying down stairs, he swore he would return immediately, and make Sir James give the girl up.

Lætitia, in the mean time, breaking from Sir James, and throwing herself into a chair, declared, that she would raise the dead before she would continue there with *him*.

Sir James, finding that he could no way pacify her, told her, that, if she
would

would go home with him quietly, he would, on Lord Bostock's coming in the morning, and proving a legal right to her, resign her to him.

After having reflected a little upon what was best for her to do, and considered that both her person and her reputation were safer in Sir James's house, than where she was; after having considered too, that Lord Bostock, if he had any spirit, would not leave her long in his power, Lætitia consented to go with him, upon condition that she might retire to her own apartment.

This stipulation being agreed to, Sir James put her into a chair, and followed it on foot, for fear of a surprise; having thrown off his domino, and put

on his sword, in order to defend himself, should he find it necessary.

In his way to Grosvenor-street, he was met by Lord Bostock, and some of his servants.

A stout battle ensued. Lord Bostock's party being on the point of gaining the victory, Sir James drew his sword, and swore that it should be in the body of the first man who dared to touch the Lady under his care.

"I will be that man," answered Lord Bostock, advancing, to lift up the head of the chair.

Sir James immediately ran upon him. Lord Bostock then shortening his sword, which

which he held ready, plunged it deeply in his adversary's side,

Sir James fell, without being able to utter a single word.

Lætitia, who had always preferred Sir James in her heart, and had only encouraged Lord Bostock from interested motives, screamed, and fainted.

While some flew to assist *her*, others endeavoured to raise Sir James.

Lord Bostock attempted to escape, but one of the men seized him.

By pulling out a handful of guineas, however, and scattering them on the ground, he soon released himself. He then made away for Dover, as fast as possible,

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possible, in a post-chaise; from thence he, in a few hours, sailed for Calais.

Sir James, who yet breathed, and Lætitia, who had recovered from her fit, were both conveyed home.

William, though he had connived at his master's vices, greatly revered his Lady: he, therefore, took every precaution to hinder her being unnecessarily alarmed. He communicated the melancholy event to her in the best manner he could; but the shock was severely felt by her: for, in spite of all his ill treatment, she had always loved her husband. Her woman would have prevailed on her not to see Sir James, whom the surgeon declared, though he recovered his senses, to be in the greatest danger: but she would not be kept from him. He had

had sufficient strength left to beg her pardon for all his follies. — “I have
“justly suffered for them,” added he,
“and am firmly persuaded that, as virtue is its own reward, so is vice its
“own punishment—May *you* then, my
“dear, who have no crimes to repent
“of, be ever as happy as you deserve to
“be; and may I, wretched as I have
“made myself, obtain that mercy which
“I, at this moment, fervently implore.”

She could answer him only with her tears: she could only, with her eyes and hands lifted up, join in his fervent petition. On his falling into strong convulsions, she was so much affected, that the surgeon, and her attendants, intreated her to retire. In a few minutes afterwards he, in great agonies, expired, but not before he had confessed that he
had

had brought his death upon himself, and that Lord Bostock had wounded him in a just cause.

Lætitia, during these pathetic scenes, was tortured by shame, remorse, and disappointment: she was, indeed, miserable beyond expression.

Lady Dursley, who could not bear to see a person, whom she looked upon as the immediate cause of Sir James's untimely death, ordered her woman and William to tell her, that she must go down to her mother directly. William accompanied her in a post-chaise.

By William Charlotte sent a letter to Mrs. Monkley, in which she told her, that she would remit a sum to her daughter sufficient to maintain her in a retired way,

way, and that she hoped she would never again appear in the world, but endeavour to repair her past indiscretions, by a sincere penitence. She also wrote to Mrs. Fielding, without mentioning any particulars about Sir James's death however, excusing herself for being too much affected by what was past, and begging her to persuade Mrs. Monkley to receive her daughter kindly—to forget her foibles. But there was no possibility of burying them in oblivion, as she, soon after her arrival at her mother's, miscarried of a son. Her miscarriage threw her into a severe illness, and she died in about six weeks after her departure from London, apparently penitent; though, it is highly probable, that, had she recovered from the illness which carried her to her grave, she would have returned to her former

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course of life, without being restrained by any proper prudential reflections.

As soon as Fawley heard of Sir James's melancholy fate, he flew to Lady Dursley. He was not admitted to the sight of her, but he spent a great part of every day in making enquiries after her health.

Mrs. Fielding, who thought her presence might be of service to her Charlotte, came, and paid her a long visit in Grosvenor-street. Burleigh and Fawley were then both received, and enlivened the party.

When Lady Dursley's year of mourning was expired, Fawley's ardent wishes were accomplished. By marrying the woman for whom he had so long sighed,

he

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he was compleatly blessed, and *she* became, at last, thoroughly convinced, that a man of loose morals, however penitent he may appear, in order to gain the affections of a woman of virtue, can never make her truly happy.

Burleigh was lively, but he was not vicious: his too violent spirits had been properly corrected by the discretion of his *first* wife; and his *second*, Mrs. Fielding, found him an unexceptionable husband.

Such a husband was Fawley to Lady Dursley, who, by being united to *him*, saw, in a very striking light, the difference between the *man of merit*, and the *pretender to merit*.

The END.

It was wrong to marry him.

he was completely blessed, and he became, at last, thoroughly convinced, that a man of loose morals, however possessing a heavy talent, in order to gain the affection of a virtuous woman, can

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THE END

AN
APPEAL to the PUBLIC,
From the aspersions of the anonymous
editor of the LONDON MAGAZINE.

WHEN a man's moral character is unjustly attacked, whether by the tongue of private calumny, or by the pen of a villifying writer in the public prints, it becomes his duty to vindicate himself from the charge, and, by every honest means in his power, to expose the author of such baseness, lest, by a total silence, it may be construed into a tacit confession of guilt, and he thereby may not only suffer in the opinion of others, but furnish his adversary with a plausible pretext for triumphing in the success of his villany.

Upon this ground do we presume to trouble the public with so insignificant a subject as our little disputes with an anonymous and obscure

writer, and hope the plea we have mentioned will be our excuse, and that we shall readily find a pardon. Without farther preface or apology, therefore, we proceed to a state of the case.

In the month of November last we published two novels, written by the same author, under the titles of "The Way to Lose Him," and "The Way to Please Him." On the first of the following month there came out, as usual, a London Magazine, including what is called an IMPARTIAL REVIEW of new Books, among which the aforesaid two novels were mentioned in terms so false and injurious to the author, and to ourselves, that we judged it absolutely necessary to take some notice of it, and not, by a blameable silence, suffer the slander to pass unregarded. Accordingly, the following advertisement was sent, enclosed in a letter, to Mr. Baldwin, the publisher of the Magazine in which the injury had been done.

TO THE PUBLIC.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

Dec. 1, 1772.

THE scandalous falsehoods constantly thrown out by the writer of the IMPARTIAL REVIEW, in the LONDON MAGAZINE, against every new work published under our name, as once betray a malignancy and depravity of heart, that even disgrace the servile profession he follows, that of an hireling scribbler to a monthly magazine. In his remarks this day upon "The Way to Lose Him," (which it is more than probable he never read,) he has the folly and assurance to make use of these words: "Written solely for the use of the Circulating Library, and very proper to debauch all young women who are still undebauched."

And of "The Way to Please Him," written by the same author, he says, "See the last article. The same character will do for both."

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By such general, by such unjust criticisms as these, are the writings of those who are not in favour with his employers, or such as are published by booksellers who do not contribute to his monthly allowance, thus censured and abused. For the falsity of his strictures on the above-mentioned two novels, we appeal to the candour of every impartial reader of them, (nay, even to his own corrupt heart, if he will do us the justice to read them) and refer all others to the character given of them by a more ingenuous and unbiassed critic, who, in a periodical work of the same date, says of

THE WAY TO LOSE HIM,

“ This novel, whatever faults the critical
 “ reader may find in its composition, seems
 “ calculated to be of service to the unmarried
 “ fair ones of the age, who, when they are
 “ happily addressed by men every way worthy
 “ of their attention, are so little acquainted
 “ with their true interest, as to occasion the
 “ desertion of them from the capriciousness and
 “ in-

“ indiscretion of their behaviour.” He then proceeds to say of

THE WAY TO PLEASE HIM,

“ The subject of the foregoing article is particularly addressed to *unmarried* ladies: that before us seems to be as well executed for the instruction of *married* ones. Those especially who have husbands of a roving turn, and strongly disposed to neglect their wives, in search of temporary intimacies with other women, will be interested in the perusal of these volumes. The hero of the piece behaves in a manner sufficient to provoke the heroine’s resentment; while she, by her uncommon discretion and address, appears in a most amiable light. To speak in less elevated terms, lady Sedley is, indeed, an exemplary wife, and may serve as a pattern to married ladies in similar circumstances. Those circumstances are far from being extraordinary; and if married women would take the pains to please the men with

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“ whom

"whom they are united for life, there would
 "be fewer matrimonial complaints, fewer se-
 "parations, fewer divorces."

CRITICAL REVIEW for Nov. 1772.

We shall now leave this defamer to his own reflections, and assure the public that as it has been hitherto, so it shall hereafter be our principal care, to publish only such Novels as have for their objects, what their writers ought ever to have in view, amusement, instruction, decency, and morality.

F. NOBLE.

J. NOBLE.

The letter to Mr. Baldwin, which accompanied the above advertisement, was in the following words:

SIR,

Dec. 10, 1772.

TO what cause are we to ascribe the abuse that, with so unrelenting a malice, is cast upon every publication of ours by your anonymous writer of the Impartial Review?

We

We are loth to believe that it is done by your express order, though we cannot suppose it to be done without your entire knowledge. Whether we are mistaken or not in this supposition, it is a duty you owe to us in common with other publishers, it is a duty you owe to us as a man, to enquire into the cause of the calumny, and if found to be unjust (as most assuredly it is) not only to put a stop to it in future, but to publish the enclosed vindication in your next Magazine.

The author of the two novels, so grossly misrepresented, is no hired writer (and, indeed, we have no connections with any such) but a gentleman and a scholar, as much above your defamatory critic in point of situation in life, as he is in goodness of heart. He knows nothing of our sending this, neither do we know whether he means to justify himself to the public, or whether he intends to pass over the injury in a silent contempt: but we hope the former.

Expecting,

Expecting, from a principle of justice and of humanity, that you will comply with our reasonable desire, we remain

Your humble servants,

F. NOBLE.

J. NOBLE.

In answer to this letter, Mr. Baldwin returned a few lines, exculpating himself from having any hand in the cause of our complaint, and informing us that he would send our letter and advertisement to the person immediately concerned (meaning his editor) who was reckoned, he said, an "IMPARTIAL MAN."

Here the affair rested till the first of the next month, January, 1773, when, behold, this IMPARTIAL MAN, instead of apologizing for the abuse he had bestowed, or endeavouring to prove what he had so boldly asserted, evaded every attempt of that kind, flew to his favourite topic; scandal, and availed himself with issuing out the following paragraph, which with pleasure we lay before the public, as it sufficient-

ly

ly points out the spirit of the man, shews how unable he is to make out his accusation, and to what wretched expedients he is capable of flying, rather than subscribe to the convictions of his heart, the having been in the wrong.

"Who shames a scribbler? break one cobweb thro",

"He spins the slight, self-pleasing thread anew:

"Destroy his fib or sophistry, in vain,

"The creature's at his dirty work again."

The paragraph we shall give whole and entire in the writer's own words, subjoining only a few observations, by way of notes, on the most material parts of it.

"A Printed paper has been transmitted to the Editor of the London Magazine, (a) subscribed 'F. Noble, J. Noble,'

(a) And why did not the editor transmit it to the public? The reason is obvious: the public would then have been acquainted with the justice of our complaint; a circumstance he chose rather to keep to himself.

"replete

"replete with those barbarous expressions (b) fa-

(b) Barbarous expressions. We marvel he did not, when his hand was in, add cruel, bloody, and inhuman; as, by such an addition, the charge would have been greatly heightened, and a greater horror and detestation excited in the minds of his readers, against the authors of so much barbarity. But, perhaps, he means barbarisms in grammar; false consons: if so, it would have been kind in him to have told us what they were, that we might have benefited by his reproofs, so as to address him in future in a language grammatically correct, and more to his satisfaction. But, however, he should have considered, that we do not make a trade of writing; that we do not write for bread. As the advertisement has been given in this appeal, the public will judge whether it is replete with those barbarous expressions he says, or not; and to their decision we cheerfully leave it. We are sensible we expressed ourselves with some warmth, but we hope it was a justifiable, an honest warmth, extorted by an accusation as false as it is injurious, and aggravated, for a length of time before, by repeated insults on our persons, books and profession, in almost every IMPARTIAL REVIEW.

"miliar

“miliar to men, whose business it is to puzzle
“heads, and to corrupt hearts. (c) The Edi-

(c) We are somewhat puzzled here to ascertain his meaning. Whether he means to say that we make it our business to puzzle heads, and corrupt hearts; or whether the business we follow as Book-sellers and Publishers; or that of keeping a Circulating Library; or whether all together, we cannot possibly determine, and must, therefore, remain a secret till he vouchsafes to inform us. If he means the former, we shall leave it as we find it, comforting ourselves with this reflection, that the public has only *his word* for it. If as Book-sellers and Publishers, he involves in his censure the very man who employs him: if it be that of keeping a Circulating Library, we would have him to know that the greatest care is taken to admit of nothing in it that may have the effect he mentions, and that our Libraries abound with authors of the first character, in almost every useful art and science; and are, therefore, calculated to diffuse knowledge, and improve the mind, instead of corrupting the heart.

“tor is certainly a man of honour, (*d*) and
 “he will be ready to give the most convincing
 “proofs of this to the Nobles, when they shall
 “please to enquire for them. (*e*) Guided by
 “this honour, he condemned their books,
 “which also he would vindicate, were not
 “those books now overwhelmed in the obli-

(*d*) Is he? We are glad of it, with all our
 hearts: we shall then have some hopes of him.
 Though we cannot but own, that those hopes would
 have been greatly strengthened, had the assertion
 been better attested than coming from *himself alone*.

(*e*) We take this man of honour at his word,
 and now call upon him for his proofs. Proofs
 founded in truth; proofs drawn from the books
 themselves; proofs that they “*are proper to debauch*
 “*all young women who are still undebauched*,” but
 not such proofs as he hath hitherto dealt in, gene-
 ral invectives and positive assertions, unsupported
 by facts. Till this is done, the world will not
 give him credit for his being the *man of honour* he
 calls himself, though he should assume that title in
 twenty Magazines.

“vion

“ vion to which he consigned them. (f) The
 “ Editor overlooks those aspersions which the
 “ Nobles have applied to him, because he be-
 “ lieves they are not accustomed to talk other-
 “ wise. Scandal is the property of mean and
 “ illiberal minds, and the Circulating Library
 “ is its palace. (g) But he cannot suppress his
 “ incli-

(f) This sentence is very extraordinary. Guid-
 ed by honour, he *condemned* those books which *also*
 he would *windicate*, had he not overwhelmed them
 in oblivion. What a singular honour is this man
 guided by! How powerful is his sentence on books!

(g) We should be glad to know what aspersions
 we have applied, that do not belong to him. Had
 we applied any that he could obviate, there is no
 reason to believe but he would have been ready
 enough to point them out. We agree with him,
 that scandal is the property of mean and illiberal
 minds, and most willingly leave it with the public
 to decide to whom that property belongs, whether
 to us, or to the *profound and impartial Editor of the*
 LONDON MAGAZINE. In what manner the Cir-
 culating

"inclination to inform them, that an Act of
 "Parliament is soon to be passed, by which
 "Circulating Libraries are to be suppressed,
 "and by which the owners of them are to be
 "declared, like the players, "rogues and va-
 "gabonds," the debauchers of morals, and the
 "pest of society. (b) Till this useful Act
 "shall

-culating Library is the palace of scandal, this bo-
 -nomable Gentleman has not condescended to inform
 us; and as we cannot possibly comprehend him,
 we can make no reply.

(b) If this is not raving, we know not what
 raving is. Rogues and vagabonds! debauchers of mo-
 rals! pest of society! Heaven defend us! What a
 catalogue of hard names is here! Vagabonds too!
 How cruel this, to rob us of our houses, and not
 allow us even a hovel to hide our heads in! Prithee,
 friend, how is this same Act to make it appear that
 we are wanderers, have no visible way of living, or
 settled habitation? See what it is not to consult
 your Dictionary! Or, perhaps, you thought that,
 because we keep a Circulating Library, we must
 necessa-

“ shall be passed into a law, the Editor of the
“ London Magazine will acquire great pleasure
“ by praising the good, and by censuring the
“ bad Novels of F. and J. Noble.”

necessarily *circulate too*, and, like our books, perpetually wander about from place to place.—Behold what pains we are at to investigate your meaning! And yet, after all, perhaps, we have not hit upon it neither. Alas! the poor man's brain may be turned, and then have we been at all this trouble for nothing.—Aye, it is assuredly so, or he would never have suffered such absurdities to have dropped from his pen.—Away then with all farther remarks: “We war not with the mad!” All resentment is at an end: every sentiment of anger is changed into the gentler passion, pity: commiseration takes place of all other considerations, and we sincerely wish him a speedy return of his senses.

Jan. 5. 1773.

F. NOBLE.
J. NOBLE.



It shall be passed into a law, the Editor of the
London Magazine will acquire great pleasure
by printing the good, and by confuting the
bad Novels of F. and J. Noble.

Speedily will be published,

- I. The Disinterested Marriage; or, The History
of Mr. Frankland and Lucy Menel, 2 vol. 6s.
- II. The Self-deceived; or, The History of Lord
Byron, 2 vol. 6s.

have dropped from his pen. We war not with the mad.
All resignation is an end: every sentiment of
under is changed into the gentler passion. Every
commutation takes place of all other conditions
done, and we necessarily with him a good return
of his letter.

J. Noble.
J. Noble.

